

LETTERS,

SELECTED FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

HELEN PLUMPTRE,

AUTHOR OF "WHITE STORIES," &c.

SECOND EDITION.—FOURTH THOUSAND.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXCVI.

PREFACE.

It appears hardly necessary to state that the Letters comprised in this volume were not written with the slightest intention of being brought before the public. A very cursory perusal will show that they are the natural outpourings of the heart: there was no purpose, on the part of the writer, that they should come before other eyes than those of the individuals addressed; and there has been no attempt to alter or emend on the part of the Editor. They are sent forth as they were written, with the omission only of the parts which are of merely private interest. An apology is always necessary for taking such a liberty with the writings of one whose permission can no longer be asked—whose wishes can no longer be consulted; that apology is in the character of the letters themselves. They appear calculated, in an eminent

degree, to promote the glory of God, by being made useful to the members of his church ; and if so, the voice of the writer may seem not indistinctly to be heard by those who knew her best, giving her unreserved consent that they should be published.

The Letters are peculiarly *characteristic*. The divine proverb teaches, “*as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*” and the Letters are but a transcript which a faithful and honest witness gives of the varied workings of nature and grace in her soul. For the more particular account of that great change, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which turned the current of her whole heart and life from the day in which it was made, of which she often speaks as her second birth-day, the reader is referred to the seventh Letter in the series of those addressed to her sisters E. S. P. and O. A. P. Her natural character was that which the world highly commends, and which made her at once the ornament and delight of her family. Her elasticity of spirit, force of expression, and animated manners, would have secured her notice in any society ; but her God had designed for her some better thing than the admiration of the world—even “that by the cross of Christ the world

might be crucified to her, and she to the world," Henceforth to her "to live was Christ, to die was gain." The Letters will show her christian experience to have been, "a very unusually deep insight into the evil of her own heart." The subtle and intricate workings of corrupt nature, suggested or fostered by the tempter, she deeply knew and unreservedly declared. But, at the same time, the finished work of Christ was ever the sweet resting-place of her faith, and the subject of her praise. However deep the pit into which she had fallen, there was no question as to the power or the love of him who had delivered and would deliver. If, with the spouse, she exclaimed, "I am black" in my own utter guilt and defilement, in the same breath she would add, "but comely," "through his comeliness, which he hath put upon me." Another peculiar feature of her christian character was her "intense delight in the Word of God." None could know her by personal intercourse or correspondence, but this must have been suggested; she enters into the spirit of the text, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:"—and why? "For I am called by thy name, O Lord God of Hosts." It was the voice

of a heavenly Father speaking unto her as his beloved child : it was the good Shepherd calling his own sheep by name, and the sheep hearing his voice and following him. When in tolerable health—and she never was very strong—at least three hours each day were given to prayer and searching the Scriptures in her own room ; and by early rising, and strict method and punctuality, she found time for this as well as her many other avocations. This she spoke of as “ God’s time,” and any interruption would have been met with the observation, “ should a man rob God ?” To those who stood round her on the day of her death she said, “ I hope you will all love and value the word more, when you remember what food, and joy, and comfort it has proved to me.”

“ Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.” Truly God gave her joy in serving him, and met her with the abundance of blessing in her soul, and in the work of her hands. She could set her seal to the words of her beloved Saviour, “ He that reapeth *receiveth* wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.” She felt, and lived as if she felt, that heaven itself could not have the joy of winning souls to Christ, and highly did she prize every hour of that short day

in which alone this work could be done. Hence her anxious care not to lose an opportunity of saying a profitable word to those with whom she might be in company. The text, Lev. xix. 17, was very frequently quoted by her. Her's was not the mistaken charity which confounds things that essentially differ. To be of Christ, and to be of the world, was regarded by her as *the great difference* between life and death. She dreaded the path that borders upon Egypt, and called upon Christians to arise and shake themselves from the dust, that they might shine as the Lord's peculiar people. Not slow to discover the peculiar dangers and temptations to which persons were exposed, she would with kindness, but plainly and forcibly, point out what she considered the sin or the snare, and faithfully advise what she believed to be a more excellent way.

The Letters will show her peculiar talent of turning the ordinary events of life to spiritual improvement; "whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." God gave this wisdom, and she had great enjoyment of life in marking his work, and seeing his hand, tracing his manifold designs of love and wisdom. She took delight in her garden and her flowers, but

they were the more sweet and lovely because a Father and a Saviour's love beamed through them to her heart. It was very edifying to those who lived with her to watch the *minuteness* of her christian conduct. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God," might indeed have been her motto; her diet was very strictly by rule, and that rule was, "what shall give me the best strength to labour for my Lord and Master." She was sensible that God had bestowed upon her many eminent gifts, which she jealously regarded as the talents to be accounted for; instead of being lifted up with the pride of their possession, she seemed much more to be humbled under the view of her responsibility for their improvement. She was very jealous of praise, and on one occasion said, "Few things tend more to humble the soul which is under divine teaching, than the unmerited approbation of partial friends." Lest the Editor should be thought deserving of this censure, he must only direct attention to the letters unreservedly given to the public eye; in many of them, she describes in such dark colours the vileness of her heart, that it seemed only just to make it known in what estimation her christian character was held by

those who enjoyed her society, while she reckoned herself "the chief of sinners," and "less than the least of all saints!"

Her end, after thirty years service of her Lord, from the time of her conversion, was quite in accordance with her life. It was not till within a few hours of her death that she was fully aware of its near approach. Upon some decided symptom of increased debility, she observed, making use of her favourite figure of Elijah's translation, as descriptive of the believer's death, "THIS MUST BE THE CHARIOT! OH, HOW EASY IT IS!" She immediately added, "But I have left undone what I ought to have done." This was in reference to her speaking to the children and servants. She had them all brought separately into her room, to the number of seventeen, and spoke to each with peculiar earnestness and appropriateness as to their souls' welfare. She seemed to have a perfect and vivid remembrance of their peculiar need, and was directed to speak the word in season to each of them. Energy and strength were given to her sinking frame for this her last work: she lived to work for her Lord, and the work which he had given her to do being now finished, she fell asleep in Jesus.

Sweet, sweet is the remembrance of her life and death! "The memory of the just is blessed:" and if the readers of the Letters find as much pleasure and edification from their perusal, as they have proved delightful and edifying to those who have prepared them for publication, they will not have been sent forth in vain.

H. WESTERN PLUMPTRE

*Eastwood Rectory, Nottingham,
May 1st, 1845.*

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN publishing a Second Edition the Editor can but speak with thankfulness of the gratifying testimonies which he has received of the pleasure and profit derived by many Christians from the publication of the Letters. In compliance with a wish conveyed to him from more than one quarter, a few notes are given in this edition, explanatory as to persons and circumstances referred to: some obscurity may be removed, and additional interest given by the information. The same letters, with one exception, are given as in the former edition: it was thought better to reserve for another small volume some valuable letters which could not be included in the present publication; if, perhaps, at some future period, it might seem advisable to commit them

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to print. May the gracious Lord, in whose name and for whose glory this work is desired to be sent forth, give the seal of his blessing to it.

The following extract from one of the letters will show something of the writer's mind respecting her letters.

"I desire to be thankful, if indeed my letters are blessed to you: I desire to give God the whole glory; but it is too hard for me: therefore never again speak to me on the subject, but speak to my Teacher, my Counsellor, *for me*. Pray that I may remember myself to be a *steward*; that I may remember it is required of a steward that he be found faithful. Pray that whilst I studiously endeavour to employ *every* talent committed to my trust, I may as studiously, as carefully, ascribe *all* the praise to him who is the Author and Finisher of every good word and work. . . . I do dare to plead that precious promise, 'I will give you the tongue of the learned,' and for the unexpected, unsought for words, which sometimes flow from my pen, I could hope that I have not pleaded in vain."

Eastwood Rectory,
20th Nov. 1846.

LETTERS

TO

R. R. AND F. M. R.,

HER BROTHER-IN-LAW AND SISTER, WHOSE HOUSE,
FROM THE TIME OF THEIR MARRIAGE, WAS HER
USUAL RESIDENCE.

LETTER I.

TO F. M. R.

F——e, January 16th, 1817.

I HAD been foolishly hoping for a letter from you. though, blessed be God, he had given me much earnestness in prayer that day, that I might meet with nothing to dissipate my thoughts, or draw off my affection from him. He sees my weakness, and I feel assured orders all things well. I almost think, if it would make me cling closer to Jesus, I would be content that my beloved sister should even forget me. There will be no snares around our love in heaven: there we may love with pure hearts fervently; and there the remembrance of that love only will be dear, which was centred in Jesus, and existed only for him. If such, O Lord, is our love, do thou bless and strengthen it; may it flourish here, in the courts of the house of our God, and hereafter, in the garden

where the Redeemer walks for ever. Such, I humbly hope, has been, and ever will be, our mutual affection ; but if the Searcher of hearts sees it founded on aught besides—if the poor creature has become an idol—if it usurps the abode of the Spirit in our hearts, be this love far from us, Lord. Oh, root it out, whatever it may cost us, and make us content to lose what is dearer to us than life itself, so as we lose not thy love and favour, which is better than life itself.

You will think me, perhaps, too *gloomily serious*, my dearest F. : and again I must remind you that few, I hope I may say *none*, have such a heart to deal with as your poor sister. *You* can form no idea of its intricacies, its deceiving images, its unsounded depths. One, and only One, dear precious Physician, has probed and examined the worst bruises, the most putrifying sores : and, what is the report of Omnipotence ? “ There is nothing too hard for the Lord.” Now will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the wonder-working power of my blessed Saviour may shine eminently in me, before the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

F——e, January 31st, 1817.

..... I FEEL very happy in nursing your precious flock here ; I trust there are some who will be cherished

under a Saviour's wings.* I desire very much to feel my weakness, to be able to glory in my infirmities; now, I too often glory in the flesh. Never grieve at the want of *gifts*; I find the few bestowed upon me, the heaviest weight in my race,—the gates oftenest open for the entrances of the enemy: the gift of a broken and contrite heart is better than the tongues of angels,—the faith that can remove mountains. To whom is it Jehovah looks? to the eloquent, the brilliant, the man who understands all mysteries, all knowledge? No, to the poor in spirit, to him who *trembleth* at his word; and I wot that they whom Jesus looks upon are well looked after; that they with whom the Holy One delights to dwell, possess the pearl above all price,—possess better than ten thousand gifts. Give me your heart, and you shall gladly have my head. No—you shall not; I think I have many a hot furnace to pass through, a furnace that must be heated seven times hotter than in general, ere these bands are burnt, this sin-bound soul loosed: but not the smell of fire shall pass on the new man: not one particle of real gold shall be lost. Jesus shall walk with me; his oath has bound him to me for ever; in all my afflictions he must be afflicted, for the angel of his presence is with me. But why take thought for the morrow,—that morrow, which may find me before the throne of the Lamb; yea, seated with him on his throne of glory! Do you know, this has been a fiery dart, which I have found some difficulty in quenching—indulging apprehensions for the future. My soul has been harassed with fear of crucifying

Jesus afresh, thus foolishly^e weakening itself for the present moment; and whilst contemplating an imagined attack of the enemy, has been off its guard for present danger. I have felt what the Psalmist meant when he said, "Preserve my life, (*not* from the enemy, but) from the *fear* of the enemy."—I believe this to be one of Satan's devices; when he cannot make us distrust present help, he carries us to some pinnacle, shows us the hosts of enemies around, and causes us to cry out in the bitterness of our souls, "I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul;" and coming to us in the garb of humility, we could imagine him an angel of light, and ourselves justified in listening to his surmises. But, blessed be God, I am enabled now to see the old serpent entwined beneath, I am enabled to abhor the self-righteous, distrustful heart, which could for one moment give ear to such vile suggestions. It was not distrust of myself, but of my dearest Lord; for "The Lord is my keeper;" it was not doubts of my own watchfulness,—then I could have borne it.—but it was of thee, my own blessed Friend, of thee, who neither slumberest nor sleepest;—of thee, who art engaged to keep me as the apple of thine eye!

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

F—c, February 26th, 1817.

..... I AM so glad that you are going to have a peep at the beauties of the country. If they exhilarate

you one half quarter ~~as~~ much as they do me, you will need a steady, diligent look-out after the inner man. You cannot think how often I am supposing *that* to be a holy rejoicing in my Lord,* which, when duly analyzed, is nothing more than animal spirits. Yet would I not be ungrateful: I am happy, most happy. I humbly trust and pray I may not deceive myself, but each week, each day seems happier than the past. I have not a care, not a fear. The day is not long enough to serve and praise my dearest Lord: and then how glorious at the close of it to think I am one day nearer the dawn of my eternal Sabbath; one step advanced in my journey towards that blessed temple, where I shall serve my God day and night, without this cumbrous load of sin, this wearying body of death. I cannot but think this long season of refreshing which I have enjoyed must be preparatory to some rough part of my pilgrimage, which would otherwise be too much for me, and surely in the strength of this meat I may go on my way rejoicing; I have sandals of iron and brass, and I see inscribed over the most trying day, "*so shall thy strength be.*" All things are ours. Storms, under the guidance of our *infallible* Pilot, will but waft us more speedily into port; he who calleth those things which be not as though they were,—he to whom are known all things before the foundation of the world, foresees every rock, every quicksand, and the still more dangerous calm, and says, things to come are ours. Thus does the believer rejoice when in the light of the Lord's countenance, and is inclined to say with David, "I shall

never be moved: thou, O Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong." The Lord does but hide his face, and we are troubled; our eyes no longer behold the horses and chariots of fire encamping round about; nothing but hosts of enemies appear on every side: we see more strength in the armies of the fallen one, than in those of the *Lord of Hosts*, and cry out in fear and trembling, "Alas! my master, what shall we do?" or so miserably low are we brought, that we hardly discern a master to complain to; or if we approach him, like a crane or a swallow, so do we chatter, and are unable to ask for assistance in the time of greatest need. But with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself; and assuredly there is a needs be for these manifold temptations. Self is painfully taught its weakness, and the unwilling heart brought to acknowledge the preciousness of Jesus.

LETTER IV.

To R. R.

F——e, March 3rd, 1817.

..... THANK you, my dearest R——, for your kind invitation, but above all, thank you for the word of admonition. This is being indeed a brother in Christ, a follower of him who pleased not himself, but bore

the infirmities of the weak. I know not any thing in which there is more self-pleasing than in our want of faithfulness to our friends; perhaps nothing in which we more evidently show our love to the creature exceeding what we feel towards the Creator, in that we would rather have his glorious work tarnished, than our friends made to feel uncomfortable. I pray for a heart willing to suffer the word of exhortation from man, and the chastening rod of love from my all-wise, all-tender parent. It *is* difficult to separate between a holy self-distrust, and a base, ungrateful unbelief; between a working out our salvation with fear and trembling, and a happy assurance that God *will* work in us to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure; between a salutary fear of the rocks and quicksands around us, and an infallible promise of reaching the port in safety. Indeed these are things which should not be separated, but truly they are a Scylla and Charybdis to steer between, and too often are our barks shattered by them. I hope I am in some slight degree taught my danger, though, indeed, when I find myself slumbering over the most important duties, and letting the watchmen, that should stand upon the tower, and tell me of the enemy's approach, while he is yet a great way off, sleep on their posts, I could almost think a carnal security was overpowering me, and that my whole soul was fallen into a deep sleep. But he will not leave me. He who sweat drops of blood for me will come and seek his slumbering disciple, and that gentle voice of love and compassion, "WHY sleep ye? arise and pray, that

ye enter not into temptation," shall make me arise from the bed of sloth, and my hands shall drop with myrrh upon the handles of the lock. Alas, alas! that we should ever suffer our beloved to stand without till his head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of night! Was it not enough that we once made his temples stream with blood for us? Was it not enough that we once covered his body with a wondrous sweat, whilst his soul laboured under heavier tortures? Shall we again damp that sacred brow with the cold dews of neglect? Behold, I abhor myself—but oh too little, much too little.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

March 5th, 1817.

. . . . You have often kindly forewarned me, my beloved brother, of the day of trial, the storm that ever follows a long calm. I believe the cloud, which first appeared as a man's hand, is spreading, and a furnace is preparing. But this I know, my Jesus will not absent himself one moment from the proof-hole, nor keep me in one instant longer than the counsels of his love have appointed as absolutely needful.—Blessed, thrice blessed, every furnace that can in any degree purge away my dross, or make me a vessel fitted for my beloved Master's use.

.... I must own my flesh is very weak, even while, through grace, I can keep an eye fixed on those ways, which are higher than our poor ways, and those dear and precious thoughts, which have been upon us ere the foundation of the earth. I find I have not sufficiently kept myself from idols—grey hairs were here and there upon me, yet I knew it not. I do humbly trust that my most tender and faithful friend does not find a murmuring thought or wish. I do trust I *delight* in the law of God, and in the will of God after the inner man, and I have a sweet hope that He, who was once compassed with infirmities, looks only with an eye of sympathy and pity on a heart struggling to kiss the rod. Can I call it a *rod*? Truly the staff is so blended with it, I can scarcely perceive there is a rod. Earnestly have I desired that I might find no rest for the sole of my foot any where short of the happy, glorious ark. My God, I trust, will fulfil all my desire, and shall I find fault with the boisterous element, with the wind and storm with which he is accomplishing his word, on which he hath caused his servant to hope? Gracious Saviour! only stretch out thine hand when thy unbelieving disciple is sinking, and bear me in safety to the haven where I would be. Thou, my father, my husband, the guide of my youth, thou wilt not forget me. Let me rejoice in the light of thy countenance, and then, poor world, you may put on your most sable garbs, and thickest gloom. But why should I trouble you, my brother, with the effusions of an ill-ordered heart? why, but to ask you to lay my case before the Lord—not in com-

plainings, my brother, God forbid—but thank him for the wondrous love that he has already shown to the very chief of sinners. Ask him only to carry on his work in his own dear way, and to help us to praise the Lord and magnify his name together. . . . May we forget the gloom of the wilderness, in the dazzling brightness of a throne of glory, which faith reveals to us.

May the God of all grace stablish, strengthen, settle you, and make you a workman thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

April 18th, 1817.

. WHAT would I have you feel for me, my beloved brother, but the most unbounded thankfulness, the most unlimited gratitude. Pray that I may in *every* thing give thanks. I do think much incense has been offered up; I do think it has been put in the golden censer of my Saviour's righteousness; that the Lord has smelled a sweet smell, and the angel Gabriel has been caused to fly swiftly to me and my children, unworthy rebels in ourselves, but in Jesus, children *greatly* beloved. I look back in astonishment at this *roughest* part of my pilgrimage, and I would call upon every thing that hath breath to praise so gentle, so tender, so wise, so faithful a guide as our Emmanuel. Carefully

had he surveyed the path, skilfully proportioned the strength, softened every stone with his own precious blood, blunted every thorn in his own lovely brow. Truly, when he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them. Never will he spare himself; in all our afflictions he delights to be afflicted; it is his heart's desire, yea, it is the request of his lips: never shall it be said this merciful and faithful High Priest calls upon his people to go where he has not gone before; where he has not tracked the way; where he has not perfumed the path. Never shall it be said this best of Captains places his soldiers at a post from which he has shrunk. No, he is foremost in the hottest battles; yea, he hath broken the bow, and cut the spear in sunder. He calls us on, indeed, to the combat, but it is only to share in the spoils, to bear the palm, to be more than conquerors. Precious, precious Saviour! gratefully would I acknowledge that the government of all things is upon thy shoulders, who art good, and doest good continually. O that blessed time, when I shall come "even to thy seat" to thank thee; when I shall tell to wondering angels of the unsearchable love of Christ. Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? Lord, accomplish the number of thy elect, and hasten thy kingdom. I am weary of a heart that will not love thee, yea, most weary because I am not more weary of it! O when shall I come and appear before God!

LETTER VI.

To F. M. R.

F——e, March 15th, 1817.

I CANNOT let this week pass without writing to my dearest F ——, especially after receiving so sweet a letter as I did this morning; though, indeed, if your feelings are such as you describe, after the receipt of my letters, I will write to you no more; if the liberty which I enjoy, becomes a stumbling block to those who are weak, I would wish to enjoy no more liberty while the world standeth. My beloved sister, let not the vain glorious boastings of a Peter, disquiet the meek, but less sanguine, beloved disciple; look to the issue, the former denies his Lord; the latter, from whom we have heard now professions, follows him to the hall of judgment, ascends the awful mount, stands at the foot of the cross, faithful to the last. You must not judge of me by my letters. Good health, high spirits, freedom from every care, every anxiety, with every thing around to cheer and delight me, often assume the appearance of rejoicing in the Lord. On the other hand, I am sure that bodily infirmities, and some cares make you look upon that as deadness of spirit, which is only weakness of flesh. These things ought not so to be; they dishonour Jesus, and injure that *single* eye whereby alone the whole body can be full of light. Whatever our frames and feelings may be, whether in our most lively or most

desponding hours, we are alike "COMPLETE in Christ." You will not be asked, in the last great day, whether you had great enjoyment, and much enlargement of soul here. Speak to that multitude, which no man can number, now around the throne, ask them whether they came through much consolation and joy in the Lord. No, "through much *tribulation*." Ask them whether they were saved by their warmth of love for their Saviour. No; but they had washed their robes and made them quite white in his blood. To this precious fountain, my dearest sister I know is applying, and what will make her come more simply, more eagerly to it, than the thorough knowledge of that most useful, but very painful and difficult lesson, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no* good thing." But I must charge you, as you would do honour to that holy name by which you are called, not to give way to these suggestions of your enemy. I would say to them, what have ye to do with peace? turn ye behind me. What! can a salvation wrought out by God; a salvation which he has pronounced to be *finished*, depend upon our ever fluctuating feelings? Believe me, we give ground to the adversary, and grieve our dearest Friend, by these doubts. Look unto Jesus. He who has been the Author, who has given you one spark of faith, must be the Finisher; because his work is *perfect*. Always remember, Satan takes advantage of a *weak body*. He attacked our beloved Champion when he had fasted forty days and forty nights; happy is this for us. You have a High Priest *touched with the*

*feeling of your infirmities*⁴; tempted in ALL points as you are. Soon will these groans be changed for songs of ecstasy; soon will you reach that happy home where there is no NIGHT. In the mean time, remember it is no mark that you are not among the wise virgins, because your soul seems slumbering and sleeping; blessed as it is to watch and be in readiness, they who have the oil of the Spirit will be ever admitted by their gracious Lord. This very cloud shall drop fatness on your soul, and when the sun bursts forth, as assuredly it will, you will see your valleys standing so thick with corn that they will laugh and sing. You will think that I have been giving you quite a lecture, I have prayed that I may speak a word in season to your precious soul. I trust I have looked to that strength, which is made perfect in weakness. Kindest love from all—may you feast on green pastures to-morrow, sweet day! God ever bless and keep you.

LETTER VII.

TO R. R.

March, 1817.

.... I do indeed rejoice, that the Lord is pleased so greatly to honour you, by giving you so much employment in his happy vineyard. He that watereth shall be watered himself—he that is a means of con-

verting one soul shall place a jewel in the crown of that Jesus for whom he once platted a crown of thorns. Nor am I a little pleased that you have received a commission from the good Shepherd to feed his lambs. How different do these occupations become to us under different frames of mind, at least their appearances alter most fearfully to *my* ever straying, ever varying heart. There are moments when the soul, weighing well the enormous price paid for its ransom, can lie down in a holy devotedness at the feet of its Deliverer, and exclaim, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" "Speak, for thy servant heareth"—"here am I, send me." These are seasons when a heavenly visiter has opened the door of our iron bound hearts, and taken full possession of our souls; seasons, alas! too "few and far between;" and, in the sad interim, my poor soul knows what it is to account the service of the King of kings, my Lord and Husband, a drudgery; to ask self, or the world, "What would *ye* have me to do?" is secretly inclined to "*exact* all its labours" of One, who gladly poured out his soul unto death for me; whose heart's desire, ere the foundations of the world were laid, was to take me, unworthy, thankless me, from a dunghill, and set me among the princes of his people. Well may we groan under such an incalculable load of iniquity as this, and be burthened; well may we desire to be clothed upon with our house from heaven, when we shall do him service as the angels do, yea, with more devoted zeal and love; for they have no such strong, constraining cords of love as ransomed sinners have. How soon, my brother, may we be

there ; perhaps a soul who was but yesterday groaning under our burthen, complaining of a cold, lifeless, sluggish heart, is to-day in the presence of the Lamb, all joy, all life, serving him in his temple night and day, without a remembrance even of the sensation of weariness. Oh, that we hasted more unto the coming of the Lord Jesus ! how would it raise and animate our grovelling souls, how many a happy walk might we take about Zion, even while our tents are pitched in the wilderness.

I feel for you, in your visits to the poor ; but beware of writing *too* bitter things against yourself. A grateful heart will not look *only* to what is wanting, but to what is bestowed. Who hath given thee a desire to speak for thy Lord ? Who hath made thee mourn for thy coldness in speaking of him ? That God who only makes us hungry, to fill us, and desirous that he may supply all our need. Neither be discouraged—a cloud may hang over the seedsman, and obscure the sun from him, while it is shining brightly on many parts of the field where he had before been labouring. You may now be going on your way even weeping, as you bear the precious seed ; but you shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring your sheaves with you. In labouring for our blessed Lord, we must remember, that our harvest is not reaped below. A Judas may say, Lord, even the very devils are subject unto us ; while a St. Paul, as touching many of his hearers, may exclaim, that he has great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart. I have great need to re-

member Judas, and I very, very often do with tears. I must own it is pleasant, and what we should seek after earnestly, to have our hearts warmed with the love of Jesus, and consequently with interest for souls for whom his precious blood was shed; but how very difficult it is, after an enlargement of heart, to place a *simple* dependence on Christ, how next to impossible to feel our entire nothingness, and that the success of our work rests solely with God. Believe me, the painful struggles this has cost me, have made me sometimes almost desirous to have stammering lips and a burthened heart, that I might have nothing but infirmities to glory in, and might more clearly discover the excellency of the power to be entirely of God. At other times, when I am cold and lifeless, Satan attacks me on this side;—the power of God I impiously confine to the instrument; I mourn over my want of success, as if it had depended on my might or power; and am ready to exclaim, “Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?” That awful text stares me in the face, “Jesus **COULD** there do no mighty work, because of their unbelief.” Truly unbelief *is* the root of all bitterness, which springing up, troubleth us: this confines even the arm of Omnipotence, and limits the Holy One of Israel. But it will not be always so, my beloved brother. The good Physician knows when to administer the long-tried cordial to the fainting spirit, and when to supply the staff to the weary pilgrim. “They go *from strength to strength*; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” Not

one backward servant there, not one lagging step, not one faltering tongue, not one lukewarm heart.

I have written a long letter, and yet have much to say that you will wish to hear. . . . May we be enabled to give up those we love to our heavenly Father's guidance—may we see the hand, once pierced for us, administering the cup, however bitter, and feel assured that it is for their soul's health. What! shall I confide in my God no farther than my short-sightedness can discern him? Pardon me, gracious Lord! enable me to trust thee where I cannot trace thee—and though thy ways are in the sea, and thy paths in the deep waters, and thy footsteps are not known, yet give me the assurance that *all* thy paths are mercy and truth, and drop fatness for thy children's souls. Will you write to me soon? Scold me as much as you please—I want quite *beating down*.

LETTER VIII.

To F. M. R.

F—e, March 29th, 1817.

A *little* bit indeed, but you have both of you been so very kind about writing to me, I must not complain. I do not hear that you are looking over well, my beloved sister; but I *know* you are enjoying

that state of health which is most profitable for you. Our precious, tender Physician must weigh our cordials ere he administers them, and he never keeps back one quarter of a grain that we could bear; blessed be his goodness that he does not give us all we *desire*. Those that I love, I rebuke and chasten. Oh, how very long it is since I have received any thing like chastisement! Satan would fain whisper, thou art a bastard, and no son; but the blessed Spirit still makes me loathe all hard thoughts of God. I shrink from the idea of again making Jesus *sigh deeply* with my unbelief and hardness of heart. I feel assured that in his own good time he will try me as gold is tried in the fire. The Lord must "keep his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem;" but he will, he must walk with me; he must feel for one who is the apple of his eye; his own infallible Word has said, "When thou walkest through the fire, I will be with thee." Fear not, then, thou *worm* Jacob; weak, grovelling, and exposed as thou art, fear not.

As I have heard no complaints from you of late, I indulge the hope that you are rejoicing in the Lord, and glorying in the God of your salvation; or, what is *quite* as desirable a frame, waiting with confident hope on Him, who never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain; joining these two difficult things, both *hoping* and *patiently waiting* on the Lord; yea, though he tarry long, waiting for him. Though the door seems shut, let us continue knocking; though Jesus seem asleep, his ears are

open, and in his own best time he will arise, and give us whatsoever is needful for us. I feel for you, as labouring under many a weight in your spiritual course. Bodily infirmity, worldly cares pressing in, and the want of quiet and retirement, I am aware, encumber one, who has a race to run up hill. Well might we sit down in despair, and say, Who is sufficient for these things? had we not the strength of Omnipotence on our side, had we not everlasting arms underneath us, and sandals proof against the roughest path. Sweet, too, is it to the still doubting and burdened heart, to remember that ours is not a hard Master, but one who remembers whereof we are made, one who knows how to pity and sympathize in every weakness, every care; yea, who *woos* permission to carry all our infirmities, and bear all our sicknesses. Thus supported, we shall not stumble upon the dark mountains; and in the deepest valleys of Achor that tender hand shall open a door of hope, and irradiate the gloom with the splendour of his own mansions. Fear not, trembling believer, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; and shall not the *Almighty* perform *all* his pleasure? In the mean time, in the way *all* things are yours, yours either in possession or denial; each way *must* work for your good, and many things which now humble thee and prove thee are to do thee good at thy latter end. How perfectly happy that hour would be, even in the midst of the most trying dispensations, in which we could *unreservedly* trust the Lord, unfeignedly love him! Such an hour, yea, such an eternity of

hours, is hastening on! Surely when we enter on the eternal rest in that tenderest of bosoms, could one grief find an entrance there, we *should* grieve to think how often we have wounded it by our vile unbelief. How would angels wonder, to hear us tell of our distrust of One who died for us, of our doubts of his word, who is truth! Oh, it shall swell the grand hallelujahs to the worthiness of the Lamb, when they hear how, **HOW** unworthy were those for whom he was slain. What wonders shall we be to ourselves! and to principalities and powers shall be made known *by the church*, the *manifold* wisdom of God.

. . . . To the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls I commend you

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

F—c, April 8th, 1817.

THANK you much for your dear little note just received. I do trust the Lord has been with you of a truth this precious day, (Good Friday.) We have been wonderfully blessed, feasting in the banqueting-house this morning. How delightful are even the earthly courts of our God, though the leprosy of sin is deep in the walls; how sweet to hear of Jesus only by the hearing of the ear! what will it be when our

eyes see him, when we behold the King in his beauty, when we no longer carry a loathsome body of sin to an impure temple; but when, with a spiritual body, we awake up in his likeness, and serve him in that glorious temple, where no unclean thing can enter, where we shall no more go out. No weak body, no aching head there; the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; there are the leaves for the healing of the nations, whose fruit cannot fail; there is the living stream, which makes glad the city of our God, which at this moment is refreshing the once weary pilgrim like you, and of which, in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, you shall drink for evermore. In the mean time, remember that to feel poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, is to be possessed of unsearchable riches, and clothed in white raiment, and to have your eyes anointed with eye-salve. What a day is this! Methinks those words, "It is finished," should sound as the unbarring of heaven's gates to us,—as the rending of the vail, to open a passage into the holy of holies,—as our grant to a seat on the throne of glory. How magnificently free is our Sovereign in his donations to men! but can we forget how dearly he paid for them? Can we forget what depths he passed through, before he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious? Can we, did I say? Alas! we do, daily and hourly. Were we but looking unto Jesus, how could our eyes be so continually gazing on those mountains, which would, in that case, be cast into the depths of the sea?

An eye fixed on him would make the crooked places straight, the rough places plain. When you can really for *one moment* believe sincerely that he *actually* suffered these things, these astonishing things, for *you* individually; yea, that you were engraven on the palms of his hands, before ever the highest part of the dust of the *earth* was laid; when you can believe that he had an eye to you, in particular, in his agony and bloody sweat, in his cross and passion;—how worse than absurd is it to suppose, that any of his dispensations are any thing but the fruits of love; how worse than ungrateful to think, that he who spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, will not with him freely give us *ALL* things. Yes, fear not: *all* things are yours; God cannot be a covenant-keeping God, if he makes not every thing work together for your good.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

F——c, April 26th, 1817.

. Your letter called upon me to look more and more into myself, and search diligently whether there was any real gold concealed under the sounding brass which had so much attracted you. It is so easy to speak high sounding *words*; so easy to have *light*, that would make any one suppose

would convey warmth with it; so easy to do many mighty works in the name of Christ, and after all not to be known by him! Truly, when my unwilling, roving heart will descend into the chambers of imagery to make any search, I behold every form of creeping things, and all the idols of the house of Israel pourtrayed upon the wall round about. I am amazed to find that so foul within, which to human eyes is so fair without. For a little moment I can scorn the approbation of short-sighted man, and most earnestly desire my God to search me, yea, to try the very ground of my heart; to bring his fan in his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor, though I feel assured this must be an operation most painful to the flesh. The dear, the tender Physician, I know has given a gracious answer already to my poor prayers; not such as nature expected or wished for, but such as grace will rejoice in eternally. We ask him to heal some sore; he examines it, anxiously desiring to apply the balm of Gilead; but seeing it putrifying, he draws out his instrument—we shrink back; we dare not trust Omnipotence, we dare dispute with the All-wise. Sad, sad indeed, would be our case, were he to allow us to heal our heart so slightly as we should wish. Yes, he has been obliged to apply a sharp instrument to my poor heart of late; I humbly trust I did not spurn the hand. He opened my eyes to recognize it for the same that was nailed to the accursed tree, for the same that prepared a mansion in heaven for me; for the same that has had my worthless name engraven on it, ere the highest parts of the

dust of the earth were laid; and truly, scarcely could I feel the wounds, before he gently bound them up with cords of love, pouring in oil and wine—that wine which maketh glad the heart of man—that oil which gives him a cheerful countenance.

. . . . Indeed, I can find no objection to the place you mention. We know it is not essential to travellers whether the country they pass through is barren or lovely, so as it is in their way to a dear home; nay, when do they press on so fast, when have they so many thoughts for home as when the country around is bleak and dreary? I only hope and pray that — may not have too many charms for me. I do dread Elim. The Lord preserve me from a loitering soul! How few press on as captive exiles hastening to be loosed; as long separated children, to the tenderest of Fathers; as virgins, hastening to meet the Bridegroom! Whilst our Beloved is ever “devising means, that his banished be not expelled from him;” whilst he is taking every means to engage us to press homeward, oh, how we linger by the way! how anxiously we strive to make our banishment pleasant to ourselves!

LETTER XI.

To R. R.

F—m, August 1st, 1817.

As this is one of those days in which my blessed Teacher seems decidedly to say, “*Write,*” you shall

not be forgotten, especially⁵ as I find you wished me to write to-day. Oh, that I could follow up the stream to its source! I *do* feel your kindness to me very *much*. I do feel the love of him who has put it into your heart to be kind to me very *little*. Alas, when Jesus is holding out every thing to allure my heart unto himself, how often do I receive the gift into my soul as an idol; and, instead of increasing love to the Giver, I rob him of what he before had, to lavish it on the gift. Oh, my injured Lord, if kindness cannot draw my heart toward thee, drive it, compel it to come into the ark.* Only rebuke me not in thine anger; correct me in measure, and leave me not wholly unpunished. If we believed God, how covetous should we be of afflictions! how earnestly should we desire that which conforms us to our precious Head, and makes us partakers of his holiness. I do not look upon outward afflictions, however sanctified, as those which most purify the soul. We may walk through these, as the three young men through the burning fiery furnace, and not even the smell of fire have passed upon us. I speak of the burning and fuel of fire within, when the fiery darts are flying thick, when the refreshing dews of grace seem to be withheld, and we are ready to say, "Our hope is lost: God hath forgotten to be gracious." This, to a child of God is the hottest fire; this is it which purifies the soul from dross, and makes it come forth as gold. This is that furnace, in which one that is not a child of God never was placed; for Satan takes good care not to disquiet his children, he

has no fire for their souls on this side everlasting burnings; his fatal teaching ever is, "Peace, peace." We have a dear, dear Teacher; but there is one lesson he gives us which we all very much dislike, and are a long, long time learning, *that in us dwelleth no good thing*; might we but find some warmth of heart, some zeal, some fervency of spirit, then we could learn (as we think) to trust him simply: but could we then fix one foot on the rock, I believe the other would stick pretty close to the sand. May we be content to let him teach us in his own best way. What will magnify the love of Jesus so much to your soul, as to find your backwardness, your unwillingness to love Him; what will give you so enlarged a view of his tenderness and long-suffering, as to find it outstripping so much unkindness, unmoved by so much neglect, unwearied by such continual provocations? Yea, if you can make *no* return here, even this shall swell your hallelujahs when you see Jesus face to face; when you look back on the way by which you came, and see a mantle of love spread over the thousand thousand steps of the way in which your flesh was weak, and your spirit, perhaps, too unwilling. You want to trust him simply,—ah! he has a very painful way of teaching this lesson. He takes his pupils down into the horrid chambers of imagery, he will show us all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed on the wall round about; there is hideous self-righteousness, then self-sufficiency; here an earthly heart, there a strong dislike to be saved in the way of God's appointment. They are innumerable as they are hideous. We would

fain turn away and not see them ; but we *must* gaze on them, we must acknowledge that these things are so, *really*, feelingly, ere the dagon will be shaken, and the Lord alone exalted ; ere we shall renounce *all* confidence in ourselves, and become as little children, cleaving unto Jesus.

. . . . May the Lord go before you in the way : may he direct every step ! why do I say, "*May he ?*" He would not be a faithful God if he did not. He has engaged to guide you here by his counsel ; and, what a blessed end to all your wanderings ! to receive you unto glory.

LETTER XII.

To F. M. R.

October 13th, 1817.

WHAT a Jesus, what a Friend is ours ! Every moment brings some fresh token of love, tenderness, watchfulness, the lustre of which appears still more brilliant whilst it shines on a heart peculiarly black with ingratitude and unkind returns. If I loved the secret of his tabernacle more, the pavilion of his love, how covetous should I be of times of trouble ! How tenderly he allures, how anxiously he courts our love, as though *he* were the gainer, the favoured one ! Poor nature did indeed shrink from the parting with those, who are so very dearly, so very

justly loved; but when the too much cherished friends left me, the too much slighted One came nigh, and proved himself better than ten thousand earthly friends. The long dreaded sound of the carriage driving from the door was scarcely heard, whilst I was endeavouring to touch the tip of the golden sceptre, and put in my petition for the choicest blessings on those who were leaving me. This day I did not see dearest C——h, but heard that she was worse. On Saturday morning, after breakfast, I was enjoying myself with C——, &c. &c.; while basking in this little sunshine, a precious cloud, big, I trust, with drops from that river which maketh glad the city of our God, was sent. M—— came in, and said a material change had taken place in our beloved C——; we hastened down; her disorder had turned to dropsy on the chest, which produced great difficulty of breathing; she could not bear many with her, but expressed a wish that I should stay. And now my most precious Lord gave me support which I could not have dared to ask for. I sat by, watching a countenance on which death was making rapid advances; she had passed a night of extreme bodily suffering, but enjoyed great composure of soul. "I have cast anchor on a Rock," "He is a faithful Friend, a blessed Lord," were the sweet testimonies borne by this departing pilgrim. I stayed with her till dinner-time, and was enabled to be in some measure engaged for her this night, while absent, praying that her Bridegroom would come and not tarry. Sunday morning I was with her again; she had passed a better

night, and the poor tabernacle appeared quietly, but quickly, crumbling off her fluttering spirit. "When shall I be delivered? Oh, blessed moment! Lord, give me faith; give me patience,"* she repeatedly uttered. When Mrs. N——h dressed her poor side, she said, "I hope you will not have this job to do again, I shall have better clothes soon." I left her to attend a feast which seemed appointed with peculiar mercy for this day. I think you prayed for me. I will thank you when the golden censer is emptied, and we see and know every breath of prayer that has been offered up for us. But oh! how did my righteous Advocate plead for me! Precious, precious Friend! On returning to her, we found her gradually weakening. She spoke to me, with some solicitude, about her poor son; I promised we would do what we could; but I found spirituals were those alone of moment to her, though they are distressed in temporals. She said, "Pray that I may die in my sleep; I should like to slide out without any one knowing it." After Mr. S—— had been, she eagerly asked me, "What *does* he say?" "That you will not now want much more here, my dearest C——." "Oh, praise the Lord; bless the Lord. Gracious, tender Father, have mercy on me in this trying hour; thank the Lord: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Being obliged to go home to dinner, I left her, hoping, as far as I might hope, perhaps *too* much, that the spirit would not be there when I next viewed that poor prison. This night was more trying to me than the day; but I desire to speak of myself, only to incite you to praise

and love my blessed Keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, though pride, I know, creeps upon my pen, and mixes in with every acknowledgment of his mercies. I pray that your feelings may be more unmingled. This morning I heard she was still in the wilderness. I am now sitting beside her, scarcely able to take my eyes off her, whilst every breath seems like the unbarring of her prison doors, every groan, like the chariot wheels of her Beloved, to convey her hence. She still enjoys perfect tranquillity and sure trust; thanks God for the comparative ease she enjoys; for, from the composing medicine she takes, she now dozes a good deal, and I think her last prayer will be heard, that she may go off in her sleep. Thus have I endeavoured to give you some little idea of the Lord's dealings towards us. The thousandth part is not told you. Pray that I may possess my soul in patience. Heaven is growing so rich in jewels. Oh, that I may love Jesus more, and I shall be content to stay and suffer for him; may we all live more devotedly to him! He never forgets us one little moment. If you love my C——h, you will rejoice, you do rejoice. In all probability she will never know a night again—happy creature! I really cannot look off her any longer. The Lord abundantly bless you!

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Oct. 17th, 1817.

.... WITH Whitfield I could earnestly join when he so often desires to owe no man any thing, but love; but truly I owe you that which mines of filthy lucre cannot repay. I must, I will make application to the treasury of the King of kings, I will endeavour to approach the heavenly wardrobe in your behalf; I will entreat for my beloved sister the clothing of humility, the cloak of zeal, the robe of righteousness, the garment of salvation. These are garments which wax not old, these shall protect you from every chilling blast, screen you in every storm. Touched by these garments, Jordan shall divide before you; clothed in these robes, a holy God shall pronounce you faultless, without spot or wrinkle, shall rest in his love, and shall rejoice over you with joy and singing, while admiring angels shall gaze on that which was woven by the sufferings, dyed in the blood, and bestowed by the unknown love of their adored Lord. And will you pray that I may be clothed with humility? The sun is very scorching here, and I love too well to bask in its pernicious beams. I could sometimes impatiently ask, why, why is this grace denied me? but, blessed be God, I am enabled to stay myself upon him who doeth all things well. He knows me far better than I know myself; perhaps, could this, my *almost only* desire be gratified, I should be too much

at ease in Zion. You must be anxious to hear of our beloved C——; * my last letter might well lead you to suppose that a few hours would translate her from a bed of languor, to the bosom of her Lord. Indeed, it was the opinion of Mr. S——, and every one who saw her; but the Lord's thoughts, truly, are not our thoughts. The works which he had afore prepared for her were not completed. On Tuesday, she revived a little, but did not say much. On Wednesday, she was wonderfully better, and received me with repeated expressions of joy, as if she had much to say; she began by saying that "during the hours of pain and extreme weakness, she could not hold close communion with her Lord, but *this morning I can say, 'Return unto thy rest, oh my soul!—Oh! precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'*" She asked me to read the burial service, which she enjoyed extremely; when I read those words, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," she interrupted me with great animation, saying, "*Not, not* for any works of mine. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' *that's* the sinner's hope, '*beloved in Christ.*'" She gave me many admonitions to deliver to W——, especially concerning his child; some to Mrs. B——, to beg she would pray for grace to cast off the *bondage of Egypt*, repeating several times, "It *won't* do—we must be *all* for Christ;" spoke of the different graces of Christians, the different manner in

* A highly esteemed christian nurse, who had lived many years in the family.

which we should deal with^d them ; “ *meat* for them that are strong, &c., but I *never could* bear it. Oh, I was very impatient ; ‘ If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ? ’ ” She distributed several keepsakes, begged me to go and see old Mrs. W——, who is dying, put up a prayer for her ; spoke much of you and R——. Thus she continued exhorting and rejoicing : I should fill sheets were I to tell you all. At night, fatigued though quite easy, she slept from ten till ten the next day, when she awoke and said to me, “ I shall not want much more now—blessed, blessed Lord,” expressed her thankfulness that she had no debts, and with uplifted eyes, and hand often raised, seemed in wonder to be contemplating the goodness of the Lord ; her lips moved, but I could not hear her words ; when I took leave of her this day, she appeared dozing, and not taking notice of any thing ; but when I was going out, she looked most tenderly after me ; I went and kissed her, and she said quite strongly, “ Good bye. God bless you, love.” I began this letter thinking to finish it by her bedside—Ah ! I must wait till I sit on a throne of glory, ere I sit by my beloved C—— again. “ Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and *all* that is within me, bless his holy name ; ” she has entered into the joy of her Lord. A sun has risen on her soul this morning, which shall no more go down. I can almost forget my prison walls, whilst I follow her through the illuminated valley, see her stand with her Bridegroom at the gates of heaven, whilst myriads of rejoicing kindred spirits, and welcoming angelic

hosts, lift up the everlasting doors, to let another heir of glory in. And now the Father rests in his love, now the Saviour sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied: now the last tear is wiped away from the enraptured saint, now she begins her eternal hallelujahs, now she does indeed find the day of her death far, far better than the day of her birth, now she beholds the King in his beauty, enters into a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall *ever* be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. Now the glorious Lord is unto her a place of broad rivers, even rivers of pleasures; no gallant ship presses there to molest her, the sound of war is heard no more! Oh when shall I thus come to appear before God? yet a very very little while, and I shall realize what I now see through a glass so darkly. My wretched wilderness heart too often makes my beloved like a stranger in the land. In vain do I charge it by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, not to stir, or awake my love. The inn is so full of filthy, earthly thoughts, that he who should have the best room, is forced to be as a wayfaring man, turning aside to tarry for a night. But soon it shall not be so; I shall rest in my love to him, while his desire is towards me, and he will ever rest in his love towards me, whom he has made *all* fair. So shall we be ever with the Lord; well may we comfort one another with these words. On Wednesday we are to commit the remains of our beloved C—— to the dust, from whence they shall soon awake and sing I am enabled to build on that

blessed assurance, "I can do^e all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." This word of the Lord has been tried in the fire, and ever comes forth as gold. I will trust, and not be afraid; his paths are mercy and truth: the support, the tender love he has ever shown me, shâme me out of my fears. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, my beloved sister, and all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

October 22nd, 1817.

Oh, what oceans of love are contained in this little cloud! At one o'clock we followed the sleeping dust of our beloved C——h.: *It is, it is pery trying.* I felt grateful that I might weep—that devout men made great lamentation over the body of the triumphant Stephen—that St. Paul sorrowed at the bare apprehension of the death of his beloved Epaphroditus—above all, that he who has left us an example, that we should walk in his steps, wept over his sleeping Lazarus; but if I was grateful that I might *mourn*, oh what gratitude ought I to feel that I am privileged to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to commit that long-loved, dearly loved dust to the earth, in full and certain hope that it shall, ere long, "awake and sing;" that it shall be raised in "incorruption, in *glory*, in *power*, a spiritual body;" that it

shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. Thus have I been invited to spend my birth-day in the tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts; thus has he made it a day in which more especially to cover me with his feathers, even his downy feathers, of love and faithfulness.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

October 31st, 1817.

YOU ask for further particulars of our beloved C——h. M——y assures me she has given you every particular, therefore let us leave what passed while she was compassed with infirmities; let us leave the sleeping dust, and endeavour to follow her, whilst disencumbered of every thing that can in any way clog or defile, she enters the palace of him who is higher than the highest, dearer than the dearest, more tender than the tenderest; or let us trace her, while, peradventure, on some embassy of love, she comes forth to minister unto us, or to join the chariots of fire that are fighting for us in the mountain. Let us leave the words uttered by an earthly tongue, to listen to her heavenly notes. Let us leave her dying testimony, and give ear to that which she will proclaim through eternity. Oh, hear her speak of that King, whom now she sees in all his beauty. Methinks she says, Reserve all your

love, all your admiration, for this glorious One, for he alone is worthy. Hear her tell of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, unfading; of the rivers of pleasure, the streets paved with gold; the banqueting house, where she leans on her beloved, and eats abundantly, whilst surely she adds, Press on, press on. Here alone are treasures; here let your whole heart be. Again, while she reposes in green pastures, finds uninterrupted rest for her weary soul, and perfect security from every enemy, how loudly does she proclaim, "Fear not. He is faithful who has promised, who also will do it. Fight bravely—endure manfully. Ten million million afflictions are not worthy to be compared with one moment of the rest and peace I now enjoy." Then behold her taking a review of the way by which she climbed to Mount Zion. I see her smile on every rough part; the windings and turnings which once so much perplexed her, and often made her tremblingly ask, If I am in the road Zionward, why is it thus? She lifts an eye of fervent gratitude to her infallible Guide, while she says to us who follow after, "Trust him where you cannot trace him." Be assured he will lead you by a right way to the city of habitation. Not one unnecessary stone or bramble crosses your path; yea, if you stumble, he has but left you for a moment, to try you, that he might know all that is in your heart. Be assured, "He doeth all things well." But let us not pass over that tear which dimmed her eye, and says more than all that she has yet proclaimed. It would fain tell of a life too little devoted to her Lord; a hard heart of unbelief, which "fretted" her

gracious Redeemer; a tongue too dumb in speaking of one whom her soul loved; a step too loitering towards those mansions so long prepared for her. Truly this is a tear, which none but the offended might, or *could*, wipe away; it is that which will dim every pilgrim's eye; it is a tear which, *could* a tear rest on the eye of one gazing on the Lamb, would fill mine through eternity. Dearest F——, that sainted spirit does not whisper of an idle seclusion from the world. She tells us not to skulk into a corner in the field of battle. Nay, but she bids us to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, to be faithful unto death; *never* to be ashamed to confess him who was on earth her hope and refuge, and is now her heaven and blessedness!

LETTER XVI.

To R. R.

F——e, Oct. 25th, 1817.

. WHY is it that we meet with disappointments in our friends? Has God deceived us? Does he promise, and not perform? Does he tell us that the purest things committed to *earthen* vessels can remain without some alloy? that there are cisterns so deep, so full, that we may drink thereat abundantly? Oh no. He has taught us far otherwise; but, alas! it is one of those books in Christ's school,

which we do not much like to study. I have often opened it at the title page, "Cease ye from man," but I did not feel much inclined to look farther. Our ignorance of this is the cause of much vexation to us; what we will not receive on the testimony of the only wise God, we must learn by painful experience, here a little, and there a little. Still, still, we come with high-wrought expectations to our broken cisterns—look with wonder at the blemishes—are astonished at the shallowness of the water—can get a little, and that with difficulty and pain, and, in the secret chambers of our heart, we almost find fault with our faithful Instructor. In the mean time, there is an overflowing fountain of pure waters, at which we are invited to drink abundantly—there is an unfathomable well, from which we might ever draw water with joy; we take but a small pitcher to this fountain, where God has inscribed, "Drink abundantly, without money and without price." Unbelief steps in—hides the glorious inscription, placing over it, "*Wherewith* shall I come before the Lord? The invitation is not addressed to me." Thus are we straitened in our own bowels; thus do we limit the Holy One of Israel. But it shall not always be so; our eyes will not always be so dim, our hands so withered, our hearts so slow to believe. When we see the King in his beauty, our desire will be towards him, and him alone. Our invigorated hand shall lay hold on the *fulness* of our Beloved, which is already ours, though we cannot grasp it. Our hearts will be opened wide, and drink in *rivers* of pleasures for evermore. Then, every stream will be swallowed up in the fountain from

whence it issued. Christ will be *All in All*; then, we shall love all *in* Christ, and Christ *in* all. *

. . . . How little do we dwell on what our beloved Lord endured, when he was wounded in the house of his friends. It was this that weighed so heavily upon him. Had it been an *open enemy* he could have borne it. We can form some very faint idea of what he endured, when his own familiar friend lifted up his heel against him, at a time when the "watchmen," who should befriend us, "smite us and wound us." Jesus knows what it is, to have every action, every word suspected. He knows it, for this very purpose, that he may succour those who are undergoing the same trial. I grieve for — — —; his eye is not on the great Shepherd of the sheep, while he can treat, with any thing like harshness, one of the precious flock. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak." But while I speak of this dear man, my conscience is pricking me very sharply. It tells me of many, to whom I have acted with much illiberality—of many, to whom my proud heart has pointed with great self-complacency, whilst it has secretly whispered, I thank God I am not as these—of many, whose beauties I could almost wholly overlook, whilst I fancied myself justified in gazing on some prominent imperfection; or rather, of making that prominent, over which love would have thrown a cloak, "walking backwards," lest it should perceive it. I want spiritual *spectacles* within. I keep them rubbed up very bright, to gaze on other hearts.

I shall think much of you at ——. You must feel

peculiarly bound to the Father of all mercies at a place where he has so tenderly watched over you; where you are reminded of what Hill calls, *preserving grace*, on which I think we should very much dwell, as it will be a source of much love and comfort. Well may we argue, "He who has thus watched over me for good, whilst I was an alien and an enemy, will not be less mindful of me, now that he has made me one of his household. He who has loved me, when I hated him, will not cease to love me, now that he has made me desirous to love him in return." Oh, my brother, meditate on that love, which enrolled your name on his breastplate, and placed it next his heart, ere the foundations of the world were laid—on those everlasting arms of tenderness, by which you have been holden up ever since you were born—on that grace, which has formed a new heart within you, fashioned the wondrous members day by day, when as yet there was none of them—that unwearied constancy, which has borne with all your unfaithfulness—that love, which not all the waters of your neglect could quench—that patience, which not all your provocations could exhaust. Think of it, till you entirely renounce all right of possession to yourself, and gratefully, cordially, by word and life declare, that you are not your own—and pray that one who has had ten million million talents forgiven her—who has *peculiarly* provoked, and met with *peculiar* love, may *peculiarly* feel the power of those arguments she urges on others.

. . . . I am permitted to tell of greatly restored health and strength. I trust I shall be enabled in

patience to possess my soul,* whether it be to do, or what is more difficult, to bear my Lord's will. If I live *ONLY* for him, I trust I can patiently wait all the days of my appointed time in the land of my pilgrimage. It has pleased God to humble me much, by showing me that some of the seed I rejoiced over was sown only on stony ground, yet I need your faithful admonitions. I know my heart often says, "*my* power, *my* zeal, *my* skill, hath gotten me these victories." Will you very earnestly pray that I may be clothed with humility; don't hate me when I tell you that I cannot put up this prayer for myself, at least it is mixed with much hesitation, and half wishing it back again, from the vile apprehension that I must suffer very very much ere this can take place; may the Lord ever bless and keep you, and give you all joy and peace in believing.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

Nov. 10th, 1817.

..... SURELY it is enough for us to have foes within and without to contend with, without having snares for our feet laid by our fellow pilgrims. It is a cruel thing to *flatter*. The soul is often more exhausted, weakened, injured, in disentangling itself from

these nets, than by the hottest contest with principalities and powers. Those who have once known the torture the believer undergoes, while this poison is pervading his soul, the bitter, lowering medicines he must take, as antidotes, the frightful oblivion of lessons of humility which he has been studying for years, will, I think, (unless much under the influence of the enemy of souls,) not administer the noxious potion a second time. I speak strongly, perhaps you will think, but my soul is very sore on this subject, having too often smarted from it.

Your prayers that my way might be made quite plain before me have indeed been answered. Since my labours here have been straitened, I have thought that my too kind Employer would look me out some other work. I could hope that a great door and effectual is now opened unto me; if so, I am sure I may add, there are many adversaries; not outward adversaries; these are but as the harmless tempest to him who is safely and securely sheltered; but I dread the traitors within, pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy. If you love me, if you prize the glory of your master, pray that I may be delivered from these. But why, why these fears? "It is good that a man fear always," yes; but it is good to cast all your care upon the Lord. It is right to work out your salvation with fear and trembling; but it is right to remember, that God worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. I do believe that Satan, transformed into an angel of light, often makes use of these *apparently* holy fears to harass the believer, shake his trust in

One who has undertaken his cause, and accomplish his grand end of robbing God of his glory, and the believer of his comfort. Could we unmask these doubts, the creed of the worshippers of Baal could not be more infamous. When we fear the siftings of Satan, we must suppose that we have a God who sleepeth, or is gone on a journey, an Advocate who is *weary* of pleading our cause. Whilst we look with dread on the rocks and quicksands, we tacitly charge our pilot with ignorance, weakness, carelessness, or unfaithfulness. Temptations, be they from without or from within, storm, calm, sunshine, or cloud, are not excluded from the ALL things which must work together for our good. I like that word *work together, linked*, as it were, dependant on each other, they are fastened to the precious side of Jesus, and to that bosom they will infallibly lead us.

Is it not remarkable that our thoughts should so clash with so very many miles between? I had been dwelling with peculiar pleasure on that Greek word which so much struck you; in my *dreams*, it was present with me. Well indeed may we ask boldly, when we have the *certainty* of being heard; “we *know* that we have the petitions,” but often veiled in so different a form, we are ready to disown them. How seldom I pray with the conviction that God is actually bowing down his ear to hear me, with the *certainty* that I shall receive what I ask for—and wherefore? because I so seldom ask *according* to his will, drawing nigh in holy confidence in him whom he heareth always, and with a single eye and desire to the

glory of God. O when I look to the self-pleasing, self-seeking, self-will of most of my prayers, I believe I might with truth, say *all*, I do glory in, I do desire to love, that precious scapegoat, which bears away such heavy loads of the iniquity of my holiest things into the wilderness, and causes them to ascend to the Father, as pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. I thank you truly for your interesting account of ———; well may angels rejoice over each returning prodigal; they will have another mystery of love to admire throughout eternity; much will then, no doubt, be made known to us of their ministry upon us, which will mutually endear us in a kingdom whose light is love, whilst they shall again point us, and we more gladly turn to the Lamb in the *midst* of the throne, the purchaser of every blessing, and behold him, who in all our afflictions was afflicted, rejoicing in all our joy. O what employment! what a situation! what a heaven! How little do we realize of it! &c.

LETTER XVIII.

To F. M. R.

F——e, Nov. 13th, 1817.

. . . . At present a very thick veil is drawn over futurity. May we be enabled to trust our gracious Lord as well when he is working behind the scenes, as when we see all that is going on. He *cannot* turn away from us to do us *good*. He knows how to refuse the evil and choose the *good* for his people; blessed,

blessed be his love, that he does not leave us to choose for ourselves. I lately expressed a fear of being too much at ease in Zion; my fear was heard and noticed in the courts above. I have been far from easy the last few days; not from any doubts of the faithfulness of God;—the girdle of his reins, I am well assured, can never be broken; not from any blasphemous suggestions that the work of the Lord is not perfect, that he has begun to build and is not able to finish; no, nor from that fear of bringing reproach upon his holy name, by backsliding, which is a fiery dart which oftenest rankles in my heart. But I have felt such a miserable *coldness* and *distance* towards my Beloved; I have not been able to realize that lively interest he takes in all my concerns; I have approached him more as a stranger, than as that Friend with whom I have so long taken sweet counsel, who has known my soul in adversity, made all my bed in my sickness, and carried me so tenderly in his bosom. Dearest F——y, have you ever experienced this? Mine eyes run down with tears, when I think of my ingratitude, my villainess. There is no shadow of turning in him; 'tis I who have turned away; the earth, the earth, I fear, has got between me and my Sun, and caused this dismal eclipse. I must greatly attribute the cause to my having been so much taken up with worldly concerns, and being prevented taking my walk about Zion. I would pray and hope that the effects may be, a deeper abhorrence of myself, and a stronger attachment to One, who has patience and tenderness to bear with all my villainess, yea, in spite of all, to love me

with an unchanging love.⁶ I trust it may teach me more forcibly the emptiness of every thing, when void of him who filleth all in all. I have felt such a chasm, as if parted from every thing I value. When I awake in the night, all seems dreary and solitary; my Beloved has withdrawn himself; my labour is toil when I perceive him not at my side; my rest is weariness whilst I repose not in him; neither worlds appear desirable, while I cannot recognize One who alone makes them lovely; life is wearisome; death has lost its charms. When, when will the day break? when will the shadows flee away? Turn, turn, my Beloved; be thou like a roe or a hart, upon these wretched mountains of division. Yet hush, my soul, possess thyself in patience; why, indeed, should a *living* man complain? Ah! I will endeavour to bear it. I have enjoyed a long sunshine; should all the evening of my days be clouded, I desire to bless that unspeakable grace which has not consigned me over to the blackness of darkness for eternity; which holds out the assurance that I shall **EVER** be with the Lord, see him *face to face*, and never groan again over a cold, ungrateful heart. I have nearly filled my letter with old self; but my ^{dearest} sister, I know, loves to participate in my sorrows, as well as my joys; and I am so wickedly inclined to disbelieve that no temptation has befallen me but such as is common to my brethren, under *every* disease of my vilest of hearts, that I could like to ask you, who love the Lord indeed, whether it was ever thus with you? At the same time, I do not think there is any rent, or spot, or

blemish in my robe of righteousness ; blessed be God, this is laid up in a wardrobe where man or devil can never injure it. Do not think I suppose it wants the embroidery of frames and feelings ; be this ever far from me ; neither do I imagine the Lord will suffer me to be tempted above that I am able. But I would urge you to intreat for me, that this trial may be sanctified to me, and that in the valley, as well as in the mount, I may be enabled to shout aloud, My Jesus doeth all things well.

LETTER XIX.

To R. R.

F—e, Nov. 17th, 1817.

THE alarming illness of dear old Mr. N—— fills my heart with anguish ; indeed, ere you receive this, as far as we can judge, he will have taken his place at that awful bar from which there is no appeal. I know not when my mind has been so exercised. It shows me how little prepared I am to love the will of God under circumstances of this nature. Where is the spirit that silenced Aaron and Eli, that animated the tribe of Levi ? I trace the footsteps of almost the whole flock over this roughest path, but I find not one who so shrunk from it as I do. It does cheer me, as the clock strikes, to remember, that I am one hour nearer to that blessed time when

my mind and will will be one with Christ for ever, when I shall hear the awful sentence pronounced, and exclaim, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord!" But I shall write you another doleful letter, if I go on thus, and indeed this would be very ungrateful of me. No, let me rather call upon you to praise, to thank, to love the tenderest of Friends. He truly hath not dealt with me after my sins, but according to the riches of his mercy. I had not long to mourn; though I have *so* forsaken and grieved him, his bowels yearned over me; he could not forsake, he would not grieve me. I was enabled, while I walked in darkness and had no light, to trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon my God; I was enabled to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He encouraged me to feel after him, if haply I might find him: he was not indeed far from me. I took up Hall's Works, and read "Christ Mystical," which was much blessed to me. I again had sweet views of my very near, very dear, very indissoluble union with Christ. I could call him, *Ishi*; I could draw near with boldness, and plead my title to all the possessions of my glorified Head. Surely this is the meaning of 1 John iv. 17; it seems as if the beloved bride of Christ might speak boldly, and lay claim to those possessions purchased for her at so great a price. How glorious, how wondrous is the idea! we cannot cultivate it too much; we cannot too earnestly pray that all the chosen of God may be led into these views, as that which glorifies our God and beautifies our Zion. What a glimpse, what a very little glimpse have I had of them! For this I shall

ever bless Mr. S——s as the instrument, and earnestly desire that I may see yet more and more, and live more as if I had seen it. . . .

. . . . I trust you are finding plenty of employment, and the service of your Lord perfect freedom; the more you do the more you will wish to do, and the more you will love your work. You *do* think of me, I know, my dearest brother and sister; I need your best thoughts at your best times. Open your mouths wide for me.

LETTER XX.

TO F. M. R.

Nov. 21, 1817.

. . . . PERHAPS you, my beloved sister, who have of late seen so many cracks in every cistern, will not be surprised to hear that we were much disappointed in —, and that the *general* conversation was very dead. Ah! what is man? How very wonderful that the most Holy One can take delight with the sons of men; that the request of his lips should be, that they should be made bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; that he should not be satisfied until we are with him where he is,—we who are so backward in speaking of him, so little desirous to be conformed to his dear image, so little anxious to be with him!

. . . . I have not yet thanked you for your dear letter.

Do you know, I sometimes think I ought not to write to you. I fear I am injudicious, and make my liberty to become an occasion of stumbling unto you. My letters always seem to depress you. I am certain the first fault lies in me. Did my soul only make her boast in the *Lord*, that Lord who is as *entirely* yours as he is mine, my F——, I know, would be encouraged to draw largely on a treasury, of which she has heard such wondrous things, on a Treasurer, who can only be grieved by the too limited demand. My soul makes its boast in *itself*; my sister hears thereof, and forgets the exact resemblance of the hearts of all the children of men, forms too high an estimate of one, while she underrates another in all points similar: then is my beloved sister made sad. I allow there may be wide differences in the natural constitution. He who holds all hearts in his hands is well aware of this, and it is a point which we should much study. That which appears more ardent love, zeal, fervour, animation, in me, duly sifted and analyzed, has so very much of nature in it, that what would be left of *grace* would not exceed the share bestowed on some, who, to the eyes of man, appear to have obtained a very inferior portion. I allow, also, that there are diversities of gifts. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? &c. 1 Cor. xii. 17, &c. But does one member belong less to the body than another? Is there one that the head would be content to part with, one that it can cease as tenderly to cherish and protect? No, my beloved sister; whatever you may think of yourself, Jesus prizes you; Jesus paid dear for you; Jesus would

count his glorious body imperfect without you ; Jesus will not suffer men or devils to touch you, till he has brought you to that place where we shall not have to *learn* to be therewith content, for we shall indeed be fully satisfied, our cup of blessedness shall overflow. Stand not considering your own body, so dead ; stagger not at the promises ; listen not to the cavils of flesh and blood, the subtle suggestions of Satan ; be strong in faith, thus giving glory to God, and comfort to your own soul. I do indeed count it all joy, that my soul has of late been in some measure tried. I do glory in this tribulation ; I trust the Lord has by it wrought in me a more cheerful patience ; a stronger experience of his faithfulness and love, and of my own peculiar vileness ; an ardent hope, even a hope which shall never make me ashamed ; a more fixed assurance that his covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips. And surely absence does but make his presence more desirable, more precious. Oh, then, what will heaven be, compared to which our nearest approaches have been frightful distances, our brightest day, night, our praises but mourning ! To *you*, my dearest sister, how peculiarly precious ! You have gone on steadily sowing in tears ; your harvest is all to come. I have already put forth my hand, and taken some of the finest of the wheat flour and honey from the land of Canaan. You have but now and then seen your Beloved looking through the lattice of ordinances ; what a burst of joy awaits you, when you shall see him face to face, and evermore be with him ! I am in danger of basking

in present sunshine: you, driven on by storms, with clouds and tempests about you, will press on through the waste howling wilderness, towards the peaceful land, which to you appears so very far off. Oh, that my late trial may bring forth the fruits you so sweetly desire! Oh, that I may be content to suffer all things for the elect's sake, if it makes me more tender over the weak of the flock, if it leads me to speak with more confidence of the faithfulness of One, who hides his face but for a little moment! Blessed, thrice blessed be the furnace!

How beautifully the Lord is working to make your soul as a weaned child, to allure your affections from the waste howling wilderness, and fix your attention on the mansion prepared above! When this gracious end is answered—when he may give you a resting-place here, without danger of your making it a rest—when he has extracted all poison from the cup of blessing—how will he delight to administer it running over to his beloved children! how loud will your notes then be, “He hath done all things well!” May God ever bless and keep you! I know you will pray that I may be disposed of as may most conduce to the glory of our dearest Lord.

LETTER XXI.

To R. R.

F—e, Nov. 24th, 1817.

.... DEPRIVATION does but heighten my relish for those blessed, those precious truths, that "fat of the kidney of wheat," of which I have been enabled to take with such true delight whilst with you, my beloved brother and sister. I have more ardently desired that glorious hour, when the topstone shall be brought forth with the unmingled shout of "grace, grace unto it." I have hasted more unto that glorious assemblage of perfected spirits, who dare to survey mansions prepared for them before the highest part of the dust of the world was laid, and to speak of a Lamb slain for them before the foundation of the world. My heart burns within me to speak freely to astonished angels of One, who set his love upon me, when as yet there was none of me—who loved me, when I hated him—who wrote my name on hands which I was about to print with nails. When, when shall I come to appear before God! when shall I arrive at Mount Zion! when shall I be with an innumerable company of angels—above all, when shall I be with *Jesus*, that alone heaven of heaven—walk with him, hear him, look upon him! What shall I hear from those precious lips which were once pale in death for me? "Thou art all fair, my love." How shall I see him employed, who was once toiling up Calvary, burthened, peculiarly burthened,

with my sins! I shall behold him resting in his love of me, rejoicing over me with joy and singing. But sure I am I cannot be so impatient to be with him whom my soul loveth, as He is desirous to have me with him. Could he so earnestly pray for it, when I was yet loathsome, hateful and hating, and shall he not much more desire it, now that he hath made me comely through his comeliness, thoroughly washed me, anointed me with oil, clothed me with brodered work, and in his own beauty made me exceeding beautiful? Was his delight with me, when I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him, and will he not rejoice over me now that he hath made me so desirous of loving him in return, while every other beauty appears as deformity in comparison of him? Ah, precious Lord! thou canst not be satisfied till thou hast set me, a worm taken from the dunghill, among the princes of thy people; and can I rest satisfied, while absent from thee, who art fairer than the children of men? Give me in patience to possess my soul—to wait all the appointed days of my pilgrimage here. Make me content to be absent from thee, while there is yet one work, which, in thy immediate presence, I could not perform; make me willing to go through the hottest furnace, so as I may shine brighter, to the glory of thy grace, in the latter day.

You will, I know, tremble for your poor sister, while she ranges these celestial mountains. Do tremble for me, and pray that I may rejoice with trembling. My only unhappiness is the fear that I am too happy. Yet surely we may prize, we may drink abundantly of that cup of blessedness which Jesus put into our hands,

when he drank of the cup of bitterness, even to the dregs. Did he not desire that our joy should be **FULL**? Does he not command us to love him with *all* our heart? What a contracted thing is *one* heart; when we would love him, who is infinitely lovely, a thousand thousand would be too narrow. Don't you think we are apt to draw hard views of Christ; to fancy that he cannot love *us*, &c. &c., and then wonder why we do not more love him? Unbelief is a bad painter. Would we but receive and gaze on the portrait the blessed Spirit has drawn of our Lord, we could not help but love him. In heaven we shall see him as he is, **FACE TO FACE**; what love will this enkindle, what joy unspeakable!

I have just received your short, but sweet letter, for which I much thank you, especially as it speaks of another on its way. I desire to be thankful, if indeed my letters are blessed to you, I desire to give God the **WHOLE** glory; but it is too hard for me; therefore, never again speak *to* me on the subject, but speak to my Teacher, my Counsellor, *for* me. Pray that I may remember myself to be a *steward*; that I may remember it is required of a steward that he be found faithful. Pray that whilst I studiously endeavour to employ *every* talent committed to my trust, I may as studiously, as carefully, ascribe **ALL** the praise to him who is the Author and Finisher of every good word and work. I do humbly hope that not much of my letters is my own. I pray that I may only be an amanuensis, as it were, of the mind and will of God; not that I would imagine them to be the *words of in-*

spiration; oh no; but I do dare to plead that precious promise, "I will give you the tongue of the learned;" and, from the unexpected, unsought-for words, which sometimes flow from my pen, I could hope that I have not pleaded in vain. I mention this, my beloved brother, I *hope* only from a desire that, if you at all profit by my letters, you may thank Him who alone deserves your thanks—the only inspirer of one holy thought or desire—the former of man's mouth.

.... What could I have said to you about visiting the poor? Forgive me, if I spoke harshly. I know I am sadly apt to forget the different constitutions, tempers, characters, of people. He who searches the heart, I doubt not, finds greater sacrifices of natural timidity, more glorious conquests of natural reluctance, in the least thing some are enabled to do, than in the greatest undertakings I can perform. I say this because I believe the forgetfulness of the *diversitie* of gifts often gives a handle to Satan, and makes the heart of those sad, whom the Lord would not have seen. Moses, the beloved of the Lord, was slow of speech and must needs have a brother to act his part. St Paul, in bodily presence, was base among his disciples; he was with them in weakness, and fear, and much trembling. Wherefore? that the excellency of his power might be of God; that here he might have room to perfect his strength. I mention these, not instances of those who gave up the work, because impediments lay in their way, but to remind you, that the most favoured soldiers of Jesus have had steep hills before them, and that that word has stood and ab-

stand fast for ever, that every great mountain shall, before the children of God, become a plain. Believe me, the way is more difficult where there is the tongue of the learned, *natural courage*, and strength.—then, to look simply to Jesus—then, to look *out* of *self*, and with a single eye unto him from whom cometh every gift; this makes the path, though more *down hill*, more slippery, more dangerous. Indeed, indeed, it is difficult to put off this weighty, cumbersome armour of Saul, wherein we love to trust, and to go out against our Goliaths only in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. Go on, my beloved brother, and though your beginning was small, your latter end shall *greatly* increase. Indeed, I do not forget you in my prayers, such as they are; but I cannot put them into the hands of Jesus as I could wish, and where else shall they gather sweetness, or obtain power with God? Do you find this difficulty?

LETTER XXII.

TO F. M. R.

F—e, Nov. 26th, 1817.

IN all probability I shall not remove my tent from this spot for some little time. Thanks be to God, I know not that I have half a care or wish on the subject. My only uneasiness has been lest I should have a wish

either way ; lest I should offer up any thing of a self-willed prayer. Those are very awful words, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." The Lord preserve us from a wishing frame of mind ! We are, indeed, in danger, when we venture to dictate to our Physician ; when, with our fevered brain, our dim eye, our palsied hand, we sit down to write a prescription for ourselves.

I know not when I have been so shocked, so grieved, as by one part of your letter. While yet we see through a glass so darkly, we cannot but mourn when our Zion is infested with enemies from *within* ; when the poor flock is alarmed, not only by enemies without, but discovers a wolf in sheep's clothing in the midst of the fold. Be it our comfort, that he who has thus ordered it, cares far more tenderly for his Zion than we can do. That all power in heaven and in earth is given unto One, who laid its foundation in his own blood, and keeps it as the apple of his eye. Yes, "the deceiver and the deceived are his ;" and if they are our Husband's, they are ours—ours for our profit—for our eternal good. Surely we may well now hold our sword in one hand, and our trowel in the other, since they, who appeared to assist in building the temple, are its secret foes. Surely this most loudly calls upon us to search and try our ways ; to pray that the very ground of our hearts may be searched ; that the candle of the Lord may light up every dark corner. This calls upon us to "keep the munition, watch the way, make our loins strong, fortify power mightily." Thus are the slumberers in Zion roused, the slothful made diligent,

the careless made watchful, the active prayerful; and thus God, in ALL things, shall be glorified, and the believer in every thing made to give thanks. But whilst I thus feel assured that he hath done all things well, I do *very* much feel for ——. O, my sister, let us, who through sovereign grace alone can say we differ the very least, lift up our hearts and voices to our great Preserver, and implore him, if he be willing, to save the soul of our poor brother in the day of the Lord Jesus. Here may the most gifted look and learn humility; here may the most holy look and learn thankfulness.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

F—e, Dec. 2nd, 1817.

. . . . It is not now probable that I shall remain here at Christmas. My old heart could tell a long story on the subject, and self sometimes imagines he has a right to be heard, and join his voice in every cogitation; but, blessed be God, it is my joy that I am not my own; that the Builder of Zion *cannot* err in the appointment of the employment to every workman, or in the post assigned to each. This consideration must ever promote resignation; but we may step higher, and contemplate that which should fill us with joy unspeakable, and full of glory—the whole earth is mine. There is not a spot, a situation, which I could not occupy, if

my Bridegroom saw it conducive to my welfare ; nay, it *must* be mine, by covenant engagements. They must first guide the eye of Omnipotence, ere they can turn me, who am the apple of his eye, whither he would not. Yea, worms must pluck Jehovah from his throne, and destroy him who liveth for ever, ere they can lay hold of a soul “ preserved in Christ Jesus.” Let us not disparage our birthright, “ *heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ.*” Let us not disparage our union. Our Maker is our husband, betrothed unto us in loving kindness, in mercies, in faithfulness. And oh that we may walk as the children of light ! feel that we are “ captive exiles ” — “ hasten to be loosed.” As *travellers*, be unwilling to rest short of home ; as “ chaste virgins,” keeping an undivided heart for our Lord ; as *racers*, girding up the loins of our minds ; as heirs of glory, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ; as fellow travellers, endeavouring to guide each other in the way ; as fellow soldiers, strengthening one another’s hands. Soon, very soon, shall we be with him whom we desire to love, and find it far more difficult to *avoid* loving him, than we now at times find it to keep the flame alive in our hearts. No north winds, no chilling vapours there. Soon shall the weary travellers reach their home, that mansion whence they shall no more come out ; soon shall those, who with difficulty have kept the loins of their mind girt up, or mourned over the filth which they ever gather, if they touch the miry path, walk at liberty in long white robes ; there their minds and affections will acquire but new lustre,

whilst they sweep the pavement of pure gold, and rest on every object around. There we shall meet; there we may, without fear, love one another: no particle of earth, no earthly affection; we shall love all in Christ, and Christ in all.

I find my paper filled, my time expired. I hope the little I have said has animated and cheered my heart. I pray that a double portion may rest on you.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

F——e, Dec. 6th, 1817.

. . . . ADDED to my regular employments, I have had an engagement, which I could hope not to have often repeated, for the sake of my fellow pilgrims, though I trust it has, in a slight measure, stirred me up to more prayer, that the very ground of my heart may be searched, lest any enemy of my dearest Lord lurk there, waiting only for the occasion when it may wound and grieve him.

In our little day we have seen those who have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; we have seen some awfully becalmed, others dashed on rocks, buried in quicksands, overwhelmed in mighty waters—sufficient to make us go softly all our days—sufficient to make every rippling wave a monitor; every breeze, subject to the strictest scrutiny. I say not that these barks ever had the infallible Pilot on board—I say not that they were ever

guided by the unerring compass of the Word; but I say they had what so much resembled both, that it does call for great searchings of heart, lest our Pilot be not a child of our own forming; our compass, composed of the wisdom of the world, and framed by that foul fiend who is often transformed into an angel of light. Yet let me not discourage my precious F——, or make that heart sad, which, I feel happily confident, the Lord would not have sad. If you had not had the best of Pilots with you, you would not have escaped the many dangers, steered clear of the many rocks, you have hitherto done. It is easy for many to *set out well*; but to keep on steadily long; to gather strength, instead of suffering loss, by every tempest, when deep calleth unto deep, and waves and storms go over the tossed vessel, serving only to drive it more speedily into port; when an eye, that would fain be entirely single, studies diligently every mark of the compass; when it is a constant struggle to beat down self-will from the helm, and have the post occupied by the heavenly Pilot; this happy vessel is indeed under the care and direction of One, all-wise, all-powerful, all-merciful—One, who must forfeit every attribute of the Godhead, (with reverence be it spoken,) if he fail to bring the vessel to the haven of rest where it would be. Though at times the impatient, faithless passengers may imagine him carelessly sleeping, yet assuredly, he will not allow himself even a *slumber*. He will take no rest until the beloved of his soul has escaped every danger, until she can fearlessly rest in him, and he, in sweet complacency, in her, for ever.

I have felt and do feel much for you, while you pass through this little furnace. Perhaps my predominant feeling is gratitude, while my heart's desire and prayer to God is thus answered, and he thus in covenant love is employed in purely purging away your dross, burnishing your gold, decking you with ornaments, and accomplishing that which shall be the admiration of highest angels, the delight of his own soul, and the blessedness of yours, for ever and ever. May we remember with submission and gratitude who it is that distributeth to every one severally as he will. What have we except sin and vileness, that we have not received? We have not brought *ourselves* to the green pastures we now feast upon. Let us remember the heart of the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. And while we view a poor brother or sister with difficulty clambering up the first part of Zion's hill; and whilst they view, perhaps with secret pain and envy, the advance and advancing steps of their fellow pilgrims, blaming that which they cannot attain; while we behold them still too ignorant of their own weakness, little anxious to lay hold of a helping hand; unconscious of their danger, ever slipping back into Egypt; whilst we behold these poor wearied souls yet afar off from the pastures prepared for the refreshing and strengthening of the flock; yea, shrinking back from them as poisonous and hurtful; what but the truest sympathy and pity *ought* to pervade our souls; what but prayer and praise *ought* to escape our lips? But why do I, who have *scarcely* been tried in this way, pretend to teach one, who is practically instructing me? There

is a voice in your life, louder than any oratory of the tongue—a voice that *will* be heard, when words are lost in air.

May God richly bless you, prays your very fond
and grateful Sister.

LETTER XXV.

TO R. R.

F—c, Dec. 15th, 1817.

As I wish to set you a good example, your kind and satisfactory letter shall not remain long unanswered. Your views of Genesis vi. 3. I much like, and now clearly see the expression in the same light as Acts vii. 51. I sometimes think of poor Asiel, who was so sore let and hindered in running the race set before him, by a legal ministry. Pray for me, that I may not “lose those things which I have gained.” There are some precious jewels which have been committed to me, that I am in more danger of being robbed of by my fellow pilgrims, than by an open enemy. Thanks be to him who watches over me by night and by day, and keeps me every moment. I do not find that one blessed view has yet been clouded, nay, I could hope, that it had even been extended and beautified; but, indeed, my beloved brother, there are so few of the children of God to whom it is given to know what is the hope of their calling, and what the *riches* of the *glory* of his inheritance in the saints,

and what the *exceeding* greatness of his power towards those that believe ; there are so few who dare to live up to their privileges, to think of themselves as the sister, the spouse, the beloved, of the King of kings ; who venture to take possession of the all things freely given unto us of God ; yea, there are so many who bring an evil report of these good things, and will not venture to fetch grapes from Canaan, for fear of the sons of Anak—so many fearful souls, who suspect poison in this feast of fat things, and will go lean and feeble all their days, because they cannot trust the maker of the feast ; and when he bids them eat and drink abundantly, fancy they understand their constitutions better than he does, and shall act more wisely in taking of these rich things sparingly. And yet more ; there are so many who, fearful themselves, would discourage the stronger among their brethren, and, ignorant of the untried properties of these nutritive provisions, would exclaim to their bolder brethren, “there is death in the pot ;” that the more enriched pilgrim needs as much vigilance in watching against the (perhaps) well meant cautions of his own familiar, but distrustful friend, as in guarding against the more open attacks of Satan. I say *more open*, for though transformed into an angel of light, assuredly the former of these is his work and device, as that which tends to rob God of his glory, and the child of God of his comfort. But while I thus speak of (perhaps) the greater part of the travellers Zionwards, whilst I look on many half-fettered souls who are afraid of that liberty wherewith Jesus makes his captives free, who still, half under the world’s

bondage, find the yoke of Christ galling, and greatly earth-bound, feel his burden heavy, may I never for one moment forget who hath made me in any degree to differ ; may I never cease deeply to feel that by the grace of God, and that alone, I am what I am ; I should of myself have heaped up nothing but wood, hay, and stubble, on the blessed foundation ; if I have laid therefore gold, silver, and precious stones, they are brought from the treasury in heaven, which could only be opened to me by him who hath the keys of David, who openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth. While this reflection excites my gratitude, it should give rise to shame and deep self-abasement. If the Lord has caused all his goodness to pass before me, how is it that at times I love him no more ; nay, not so much as those who have but seen him pass in a strong wind, in an earthquake or in fire. Can I boast of faring sumptuously every day, when I see those who gather up crumbs only from the master's table, labouring more diligently, fighting more manfully ? Shall I pride myself on being taken so often to the top of Pisgah, and having such glorious views of the promised land, when I behold some, who have scarce caught a glimpse of it, hastening on more eagerly, running the race more swiftly ? Unto God, truly belongeth praise, but unto me, shame and confusion of face.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

1817.

..... Don't you think I ought to begin by scolding you a little bit, for stealing my most valuable of earthly jewels? No! believe me, I could hope you are a means of imparting a blessing to my soul, for in this separation from my dearest sister, you are weaning me from a world still too dear, and *driving* me (too backward in being *drawn*) to the only ever near, ever faithful Friend. We have need indeed to *watch unto prayer*. I believe the neglect of this often leads us to find fault and murmur at those things for which we have been most earnestly petitioning. I know not any prayer with which I have oftener assailed a mercy seat, than that there may be none upon earth I may desire in comparison of Jesus. In this separation from those with whom I have walked so pleasantly Zionwards, I trust I read an answer to my prayer; and there are happy seasons, when I could rejoice to be separated from any thing, however dear, which prevents my leaning simply and entirely on Jesus. Truly, when that blessed sun shines brightly on our souls, we do not, we cannot need poor, poor twinkling stars.

I trust you are busy in your dear Lord's vineyard. It is a favoured spot, the former and the latter rain rest upon it, and while we are employed in it, the great husbandman takes care that our souls should be

as a watered garden. O that we did but feel the value of a soul, and more earnestly seek that they should be partakers of heavenly joys!

LETTER XXVII.

To F. M. R.

F—c, Dec. 20th, 1817.

It seems a very long time since I had a coze with you on paper, though truly, my heart seldom ceases talking *to* you, *for* you, and with you A too impatient spirit will scarcely brook delay, or submissively bear the period of exile from that home, where we shall all meet, and all hearts will feel the same, all eyes behold the same, all tongues declare the same; where among the myriad notes from the myriad harps of our brethren and sisters, not one discordant sound shall be heard, not one faltering accent. But to be a means of bringing one more voice to that glorious company, of swelling that sweetest song of praise to the precious Lamb, *should* indeed more than reconcile us to this desert land, where discord is carried in every breeze, yea, sometimes even within the walls of Zion; and where sin and unbelief so often oblige the poor pilgrim to hang his harp on the willow, or whilst he holds it, so tie his fingers, so damp the strings, that it produces little better than a murmuring sound ere it reaches the courts above. But

where is now my harp, while I thus complain? Am I to join that perfect chorus? Am I to praise my Beloved for ever, unwearied by a body of sin, to serve him day and night, uninterrupted by enemies from within, or from without, to sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, with increasing joy and gratitude? Come then, my soul, sit not down to weep, but sing one of the songs of Zion, though it be in a strange land. Look onward yet a few steps, and surely thou wilt find enough to animate and warm thee; true, thou canst at best but lisp it; but soon shalt thou put away childish things, and outdo cherubim and seraphim, while thou shoutest eternal praise unto him who loved thee, and washed thee from thy sins in his own blood.

Thank you very much for your letter: the questions I propose to you are some which have been put to me by those around, for whom I desire to obtain answers from better authority than my own; I like very much what you say on the parable, but I am asked, "If on my first apprehension of Christ, I am meet and ripe for heaven, why is my state described as growing corn? why am I not said to be ripe, and fit for the sickle, until the full corn in the ear?" Well do we know, that it is an easy thing with him who spoke the world into being at a word, and created all things by the breath of his mouth, to create, in the twinkling of an eye, a new heart within us, to prepare the little grain of mustard seed to flourish in his courts for ever. But Satan makes use of pride and unbelief to work upon this parable and similar passages, and to cause the

dejected believer to exclaim, "I am not prepared, I am not ripe for glory," &c. But sure I am, the seed of grace, however feeble, however little advanced, *if it be an incorruptible seed*, once transplanted into the garden of God, will not desire to return; in order to ripen *here*. One little ray from the glorious sun there, will do more than the interrupted, clouded light and heat it could receive in thousands of years' sojourn here. This blessed power shall enable the children of the promise, who have scarce opened their eyes on this world, to view the Lord in all his glory; and the voices which here were scarcely *heard*, to shout as loud the song of triumph, as those who have spent years on earth in prayer and praise. "The child shall die an hundred years old," as meet for glory as the oldest saint, as undeserving as the oldest sinner.

. . . . May you distinctly hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." I know well the danger of those arguments with which you are beset; because all that pleads for the world, has the flesh and the devil on its side. The Word of God is so very express, that I can scarcely imagine a sincere, praying, scripture-reading Christian erring on this point, except it be a very young one, who has little knowledge of the heart of man, and the religion of Jesus. Could any further testimony be wanting, I think we have only to look to the experience of those, who pursue that line of conduct. How seldom are they gladdened by the light of God's countenance! how little heavenly mindedness! what

a *checked, nipped*, contracted growth! what gloomy doubts and fears! how little sweet communion with the grieved spirit! how unprofitable their conversation among the children of God! how little thirst for the courts of the Lord! how *scarcely* are they saved! The motive may, on a slight survey, appear right, but, when well examined, prayed over, sifted, will show how much dross, chaff, rubbish, it contains. It can only be when a Christian ceases to act and speak as a member of Christ, that the carnal mind, which is *enmity*, can tolerate him. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own."

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

1817.

TELL me, and tell me truly, whether you think I *ought* to write so often to you. My old heart is ready enough to listen to your frequent assurances, that my letters are profitable to you; but, *because* this old deceiver has so loud a voice on this side, I am inclined to suspect the whole party, and to give my vote against him. I do *very* much desire to remember that I am not my own—that I must restore every talent with usury. When you have been too partially glorying in the gifts and graces committed

to my trust, my soul has tremblingly listened to an appalling voice within, "To whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Should my God reckon with me, I could not "answer him one of a thousand." Yet, methinks, I would not eat or drink, sleep or wake, speak, think, move, or live, but for him who poured out his soul unto death for me; methinks this is all my desire, though, alas! it is not thus with me; though the law in my members wages too successful a war against the law of my mind. But oh! whence the conflict? Satan is not divided against himself; why then am I thus, if there be not a Jacob, as well as an Esau within? even a Jacob that hath power with God, and as a prince, shall prevail. *Could* nature, or *would* nature, in opposition to her own ease and advancement, have given birth to these desires? Oh, no, my beloved sister, however thwarted, however crushed, however weakened, and, at times, almost stifled, by the oppressive atmosphere and the ungenial soil, they do bear the marks of divine workmanship; they do display the handiwork of Omnipotence; and, as they soar upwards to heaven and heaven's King, they declare the source whence they proceeded, the treasury whence they were drawn. And whilst in unquestionable characters is inscribed on them, "God has given grace," inseparably linked with them is that unspeakable gift, *glory*; while a train of blessings, linked by the bonds of an everlasting covenant, proclaims, *no* good will the Lord withhold from you.

Blessed, blessed pledges of our inheritance! By these we already take possession—by these we can prove our title to glory; for what is grace, for what is all holy desire, but glory, fighting in the vale? and though, in comparison, it may be but as a piece of turf, or clod of ground, taken from an earthly possession as a pledge of right to the whole, yet, as such, surely it may well gladden the heart of man, cause him to triumph in Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Yes, your *desire* to love is a pledge of the unbounded, increasing love, which shall fill your whole soul through all eternity—your *desire* to serve, is a pledge that you shall soon excel in strength to do his commandments; that though here you have lain under a thousand incumbrances, and your soul fluttered in vain to get free from heaps of rubbish, yet, soon shall you be as the wings of a dove, which is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold; while desire, with yet swifter pinion, shall fly unimpeded to perform all his pleasure. Your wish to know no will but his, is a sweet earnest that ere long you shall be one with Christ, and Christ one with you: so blended, that no possible shade of difference in will, wish, or desire, can then find a place. Your *desire* to praise and thank him more, is a dawn of that endless day of praise, which has long shone brightly on your purchased possession, your cloudless Canaan, whose meridian is bounded only by eternity. Alas! alas! how little do we love, or act, or think, or speak, as heirs of such an inheritance! How often do we give Jesus cause to be

grieved with us, while he marvels at our unbelief; marvels how we can thus dishonour him, and rob ourselves of comfort, and cause him again and again to exclaim, "How is it that ye do not believe?"—"Where is your faith?"

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

1817.

. TRULY, Jesus is a friend that loveth at all times; a brother born for adversity. When I parted from you, my long loved, my dearest earthly prop and comfort; from you, who have been and are dear to me as my own soul, I felt, indeed, for a few minutes, as an unsupported reed, shaken by the wind; but blessed be God! I was enabled to flee to the secret of the pavilion of love, set apart for the day of trouble; everlasting arms were placed around me, and the sweet whisper of the Friend who sticketh closer than the most affectionate of sisters, "I will not leave thee comfortless, I will come unto thee," was as the south wind breathing upon my garden, and causing the spices of praise and thanksgiving to flow forth. The spirit of heaviness was comparatively dispersed, and the garment of praise seemed to clothe all. When they talked of my returning to you very soon, I know not whether my spirit did not feel a sort of

jealousy for my beloved Lord, a fear that I should not be so wholly his. But the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and I hardly dare to examine how much my heart is building on the sweet hope. I begin to suspect every feeling of resignation and thankfulness, and tremblingly to question whether I should find them in my heart, without the prospect of being so soon re-united to you. Indeed, were we never to meet again on this side Jordan, we ought not to complain or murmur. When I look upon the way in which we have so long journeyed together, crowded with the most peculiar love and mercy; when I consider that distinguishing grace, which made us both to differ from the slaves of Satan around us, and to agree so sweetly with each other; when I contemplate that tenderness which enabled us to strengthen each other's hands, and confirm the feeble knees, so that the crooked ways became straight, and the rough places plain to our feet, the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose, and the mutually supported yoke became easy and pleasant to our shoulders: when I remember these, and thousand thousand other mercies, mercies which we shall never be aware of, till we know even as we are known, I dare not open my mouth again in repinings; and, methinks, if I heard a decree, "These sisters meet not again, until they sit down with me on my throne of glory," I could kiss the rod, and say, "Even so, Father, if so it seem good in thy sight. Thou who hast led us so gently, so tenderly, canst have nothing but purposes of love towards us: not as we will, but as thou wilt."

But something whispers to me, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Lord, pardon my vain boastings! let me feel no other strength, but what I derive immediately from thee; and then I have thy word for it, that no day can bring forth more than I can bear. I anticipate that you will say, "Oh, if I were sure of meeting her in heaven, I should not grieve at this separation." Blessed be God, it is not necessary for you to be sure of it, in order for the thing to *be* sure. It is not said of the glorious company in heaven, from whose eyes the last tear has been wiped, that they came through much joy and peace in believing; through bright hopes and a cheerful sunshine; but through much *tribulation*. My dearest F—— has received a heart to mourn; a heart which Jesus pronounces blessed, and shall we say that Jesus does not know what *is* a blessing? Be this far from us! Judging from myself, I know that Jesus never afflicts willingly; and when the Sun of righteousness is hidden from mine eyes, some sin or carelessness has formed the cloud which separates between me and my God. "Ye are God's husbandry;" 'tis he who causes the sun to shine on his garden, or waters it continually with the former and latter rain, or causes the cloud to rest over it; in the latter case, we are a long time learning the lesson to be "there-with content;" but surely, St. Paul includes it in the "whatsoever state." Let us, however, diligently try and examine our own hearts; it is a disagreeable book I have been attempting to study much of late, but I scarcely read down one blotted page, ere I shut

it up, and retire from it in dismay. What a wondrous book will this be to read in the great day! O how closely must we cling to Jesus, how entirely must we crouch and hide ourselves beneath his wing, when the hideous mystery of darkness is made manifest! What acclamations, what shouts of praise will burst forth to the Lamb, when *such* souls are pronounced without spot or blemish!

Dear ——— felt much having lost the *melancholy joys* of taking leave. But there are no tears in heaven; and even tears of joy, at the glorious meeting of the precious Head, and all the members, inasmuch as they are tears, shall be wiped away. Remember me to ———, and believe me—oh, what can you believe me? never what I am, either in coldness of heart towards my heavenly Friend, or in love towards you, my precious sister.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE SAME.

I COULD grieve, in having so unintentionally caused you grief, did I not know from experience that it is a wholesome sorrow, and grief that will not hereafter be grieved over. I must acknowledge with you, that few things tend more to humble the soul which is under divine teaching, than the unmerited approbation of partial friends. A still, small voice within echoes,

“Hypocrite, deceiver!” &c. to every note of praise; reminds you more forcibly of what you ought to be, and of what you are not, and tells of the very different account which *might* be given by the Searcher of hearts. Yes, might, but is not, never will be; nay, the most partial, most admiring friend, cannot say so much in your commendation, as does that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. We can but admire this and that grace in you; he sees you now as we shall see you, ere long, ALL fair, without one spot. When we are ready to condemn, he justifies; where we could find some little defect, he pronounces you to be without blemish. Whatever the altogether lovely one is in the Father’s eyes, that you are; he hath made you accepted in the beloved; he hath clothed you with the garments of salvation; he *hath* covered you with the robe of righteousness. In this not only your shame is covered, but you have ornaments, you are adorned;—yea, to say all (oh, what a wondrous all!) in a few words, you are made “the righteousness of God in him.” Yet, though already *complete* in Christ, we can but little enjoy that completeness. We have a home, but we are not at home; we have a perfection of holiness, but we have not yet entered into the enjoyment of it; we have a fulness of joy, but here we can hold but little sips of it; we are the sons and daughters of God, but we are captive exiles; in a word, our burden is, that we are present in a body of sin and death, and absent from the Lord. We are chained to an accursed nature which hates what we would love, and grieves whom we

would serve. Here, then, we *must*, we *shall* groan, being burdened, but oh! let us not groan, let us not sorrow as those without hope. A prisoner may mourn over his prison walls, but he will rejoice in a free and full discharge from the sentence of death. Chains will be galling to the man who would be up and doing, but he could anticipate with delight the fixed day and hour, when his chains are to be knocked off, and he is to fulfil the desires of his heart, without any incumbrance. Exile from a beloved parent is very painful; but joy and gladness are written on each moment, as it tells of the nearer approach of the hour, when the child shall rest in its Father's bosom, never, never to leave him. Truly then, though sorrowful, we may be *always* rejoicing; though bowed down, and oppressed with infirmities, we may lift up our heads with joy, for our redemption draweth very nigh. And oh! let us bless our God, that he has given us to feel our corruptions. "A dead man cannot feel the worms that are feeding upon him." Why, why is it not thus with us? Oh! precious struggles, precious groans, which bespeak us heirs of immortality, born for an eternal day. The shadows *do* flee away apace; the bright and morning star has arisen; soon shall our eyes behold an unclouded sun; a sun that shall never set; and our dreary nights of sin, sorrow, desertion, conflict, shall be known no more for ever. Then let the children of Zion rejoice in their King! Is it for such children to go mourning? Yes, even for such there is a need ~~be~~ for heaviness, at times; they shall feel, they shall remember that though the

night is *far* spent, it is not yet *fully* spent; they shall be made to stretch out their necks with eager longing for the Great Deliverer. He shall have many an anxious, "How long, Lord! come quickly; make haste, my beloved," as he comes over the mountains of divisions. But look! how is he coming? like a young roe or a hart! When we forget thus to pant after him, when we would lie down and slumber in this wretched night; welcome trials, welcome ever sore temptations, that bring us again to thirst for our God, even for the living God; to faint, to open our mouths, and pant for our places before God. Welcome stormy wind and tempest, that fulfils only his word and drives and keeps us very near him. Yes, the spirit welcomes, but the flesh shrinks, yea, cries out oh! cowardly, cowardly flesh! of what would it not rob us?

I have run away from —, and am "indulging you with one of my evening reveries. . . . Forgive me perhaps I have written incoherently. If there is any of the inditing of my blessed Teacher, may it be much blessed to your precious soul! and may he take away all that is not profitable."

LETTER XXXI.

To R. R.

1817.

How you make me long for a good coze with you, my dear brother, when I look at your three interesting sheets, and think how briefly, or not at all, I must answer them. But thanks be to God, every rising desire is quickly crushed by the dear remembrance, that if it were for the benefit of either of our souls, a covenant God is even *bound* to accomplish it, and that its not being thus, is in subjection to that oath of Jehovah, who has engaged to make all things work together for our good. How rich, how unspeakably blessed is the believer! *All* things are yours, whether things present, or things to come. Of the former, how often do whispers prevail within, "*this, or that, is against me;*" whereas, would we but tarry the Lord's leisure, we should find it sent to bring our souls nearer to the spiritual Joseph, to make us feed more simply on him, and acknowledge the dearth that reigns wherever we turn elsewhere. How truly too are things to come ours, ours through the superintendence of our all-powerful Head, ours through the guardian tender care of that watchful Shepherd, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth; ours, perhaps, so completely, that when they arrive, we may be seated on thrones of glory, more than conquerors over the world and all things therein, through him who hath loved us with an *everlasting* love.

* Your account of the school grieved me much. O feed the lambs, my beloved brother, with the sincere milk of the word; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. It is indeed a precious charge, but I find it is one in which I am especially apt to forget my weakness. I feel no alarm among children, and therefore, finding great energy and tenderness in my heart, and giving freer vent to it, I too, too often find myself resting on this; miserable are my after feelings when this has been the case; I seem to have shut up the heavens, and prevented the dews from falling on the dear children. I seem to have held back the only arm which could indeed have blessed them, and to have robbed them of that glorious strength which is only made perfect in weakness. I pray that this may never be the case with you; I trust this is one among the many distresses in which I am almost a solitary mourner.

. . . . Surely dear Mr. W——, could not suppose there were *separate* mansions in heaven. I would not have even walls of "precious stones," to separate those who are so closely knit together in Christ Jesus. I love indeed to think that a mansion was *prepared* for me, yes, even for me, before the foundations of the world were laid, that a place was appointed for me in the highest heavens ere I breathed on earth. I love to remember if an earthly home should become wearisome, that Jesus has made one *ready* for me, from which I should not be kept one moment, but that I might enjoy it more fully. I love to think that cherubim and seraphim cannot make a crucified Jesus

forget his grovelling members, but that it is the employment of the Highest to prepare mansions for them. In any other sense, I know not that I have ever considered these words.

How sad is your account of poor Mr. B——; can he have ever rejoiced in the light of the Lord's countenance, and not know how dismal a thing it is when sin separates between us and our God, and hides his face from us? The Lord, I know, does not punish in the way of *satisfaction*; for I believe the Lamb without spot or blemish has paid every farthing of his redeemed's debts. I know too that the Lord only chastens in love, and never afflicts willingly—but shall an affectionate child *provoke* a father's anger? shall it *rejoice* in his frowns? Should it not rather be its grief that love itself is forced reluctantly to raise the avenging arm; that he, who groaned on Calvary, has been again made to serve with his sins, and been wearied with his iniquities! Sure I am, from Scripture and experience, that the most aggravated and heinous sins, are those found in the heirs of glory; and that the peculiar visitations of the Lord for iniquities, will be to those whom *only* he has known of all the families of the earth. I should think little of that love which could willingly grieve the object it professed to love, or of that allegiance which could take part with rebels against its King.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

1817.

THANKS are but a meagre return for what you have sent me, my beloved brother. I must apply to some better store than my own; and, blessed be God, I may go to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and draw as largely as I will on that inexhaustible fund. Oh that my hand of faith were stronger, my heart more enlarged, to obtain blessings for you! Painfully do I feel that I am not straitened in the Lord, but in myself. I see him mourn over me, as he holds forth precious promises, which it cost him very much to purchase for me, and my arm, paralyzed with unbelief, cannot stretch itself forth, and lay hold of them. I see him look with compassion on me, when I have been with him many days, and had nothing to eat, and am fainting by the way. I hear him say, "open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" but instead of listening to a call so suited to my case, I give ear to a vile whisperer, "this is not addressed to you, this table in the wilderness is not spread for you." Oh how I abhor and loathe myself, for dealing thus unkindly with my blessed Lord, whilst he against whom only I have sinned, in whose sight alone I have done this evil, breathes nothing but tenderness and love towards me. Though I often, alas, believe not, yet he abideth faithful; though my love waxes cold, his never changes; though I stray continually, he is never weary

of seeking me out, and bringing me back to his fold ; though I halt, as if I were journeying towards a prison and an enemy, rather than towards the tenderest of friends, he assembleth again her that halteth ; and when a soul, that absolutely *cleaveth* to the dust, drags on unwillingly towards a throne of glory, a crown of joy, do I hear one reproachful word from my guide ? do I see one impatient look ? Nay, but he takes me by the hand, and gently leads me, or pitying my faltering step, and remembering whereof I am made, he even takes me up in his arms, and carries me in his bosom. If such is my Shepherd, surely I can lack nothing. O yes, blessed Lord, one thing lack I yet, a heart to love thee, a heart that feels thy love and tenderness. a heart to show forth thy wondrous dealings towards the very chief of sinners. Nor shall I want it long. *God is love*—heaven is lighted by beams of love, for the Lamb is the light thereof ; and can there be a cold heart under such beams ? The courts of heaven will re-echo with the song of Moses, and can there be one soul among the innumerable throng *able* to think with indifference or ingratitude on what God hath wrought ? No, every harp will become a golden harp, every breath a hallelujah. How could you suspect that *love* was a powerful principle in a heart to which it is almost a stranger ? One little spark I humbly trust is infused, or whence does the poor flax smoke with such fervent desires for it ? O thou who hast given the desire, withhold not that for which thou hast put it into thy servant's heart to pray—kindle the smoking embers with a live coal from thy

altar, send down fire from heaven, cause it to drink up the waters which an evil world is pouring abundantly upon and around the altar, in trenches which I am too diligent in making. O consume thy unworthy sacrifice; may it be an offering entirely thine, and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour in the *beloved*! Thus do I pour out my heart, and is this *love*? nay, it is but the faint desire, but the cry of a babe. I long to act love, to find it as a leaven in every thought, word, and action, to know no law but the law of love. Deeply do I experience the want of this love in my converse with worldlings. I know and am persuaded that the sons of Belial are all of them as thorns thrust away, which cannot be taken with hands, and that the man who shall touch them must be fenced with iron. As such I would ever wish to feel a holy awe when with them, and I must look on that man as blessed, who hath not sat in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners; but still, when the all-wise God sees good to bring me within the reach of this sword of his, how sad is my impatience, my want of tenderness and pity; how often my opposition arises from no better motive than a *spirit* of opposition, naturally engendering pride and self conceit, and a secret whisper of self applause, whilst I say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." How watchfully should we guard against so odious a spirit, how earnestly pray for that mind which was in Christ, when he beheld the city and wept over it.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

F——c, January 3d, 1818.

I HAVE long relinquished the hope of extricating myself from my debts to you, my beloved brother, for how can I repay all your kindness? I do endeavour, in the name of my precious Saviour, to make large demands for you upon a heavenly treasury; I do desire that you may enjoy rich earnestness of your purchased possession; that you may be filled with all the fulness of God; that you may embrace the exceeding great and precious promises, with the assurance that they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and that he must first be destroyed, ere any *one* can be, by any possible means, circumstance, or situation, touched or blemished.

. I rejoice with joy unspeakable whilst I behold my glorious Anchor now fastened within the veil, where my little bark will so soon be moored. I would that my life should become one unwearied theme of rapturous praise. May we be more enabled to realize our privileges, and rest upon Jesus, as our sole anchor. How would this still the raging of the sea and the noise of the waves! What a sweet sense of security should we enjoy, in the most dark and boisterous night; not over anxious for fair weather, nor over fearful of storms or calms! It would be, it should be, enough for us to say, "I have an anchor, both sure and steadfast; the eternal God is my anchor, fixed in

an unchangeable world; where he is, there I must also be.

. . . . What encouragement have you had to trust your covenant-keeping God! I have endeavoured to thank him for this gracious answer to our prayers. I would now pray, that the habitation thus kindly kept in store for you, may have inscribed on the door-posts, in every part of it, "Holiness to the Lord;" that it may become a palace where the King of kings will delight to dwell; that you may never receive him as a stranger there, or as a wayfaring man, who only turns aside to tarry for a night; but ever welcome him as the giver, assign him the uppermost seat, make him Lord over all your house, ruler over all your substance, that he may be your King at your table, and cause your spike-nard to send forth a sweet smell; your physician to heal all your diseases; your nurse to make all your bed in your sickness; your watchman, who never slumbereth, to keep you night and day; in a word, a wall of fire around you, and the glory in the midst of you. And oh! may you be to him living sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

How delightful a gleam the prospect of a restoration of our much-loved friend spreads over my mind, those only can imagine who have experienced any thing of the thick gloom with which the intelligence of his mysterious illness clouded it. I could hope my God has been pleased to make me learn a *little* from this solemn lesson. I knew not how far too much I had prized the broken cistern, and had forgotten how *jealous* a God we have to deal with. Blessed, thrice

blessed, every dispensation which assists the soul in arriving at that happy state, when it can say, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from him:"—a state which can admit of no disappointment; a state for the attainment of which we must pass over many a rugged path, and endure many a cloudy day. That adversary who does indeed diligently and unremittingly take advantage of every little inlet to the soul, has harassed me not a little of late on this subject. He has almost made me afraid to walk about Zion, to meditate on the mysteries of godliness, to drink abundantly of the cup of blessedness; and with his skilful, plausible arguments, bade me be content to enjoy a little, rather than go too far, and lose all. How truly such fears are the offspring of the father of lies and blasphemies! Blessed be God for enabling me to perceive this; yea, I have indeed much to bless him for; for whilst the roarings of the enemy were most appalling, I could yet catch a glimpse of the *chain*, I could see that bounds were set that he should not pass, I was assured that there was a needs-be for the trial. Speaking after the manner of men, I believe that I have very much to go through, ere I shall learn of my beloved Lord to be meek and lowly in heart. My spirit earnestly desires a conformity to his dear image; my flesh shrinks from the furnace. Yet would I not limit the Holy One of Israel. I know it is an easy thing with him, who speaks and it is done, to command every grace into my soul. He who created every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field *before* it *grew*, could

cause an instantaneous production of every plant of grace in my soul ; yea, were it for my good, it must be so. But he better understands my interest and my safety, by keeping me waiting at the posts of his gates ; he has pronounced that station a blessed one, and I wot that that which he blesses is blessed indeed.

. . . . Do you pray for me ? The Lord is loading me with honours, assigning me an important post in his army ; and sometimes all the reply he gets from an idle, unbelieving soul is, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” And yet never once has *his* sufficiency been denied me, never have I had occasion for these apprehensions. The Lord bless you and make a blessing.

LETTER XXXIV.

To F. M. R.

F——e, January 8th, 1818.

. . . . Your little book I am exceedingly pleased with ; you know I love Calvary's sermons far better than Sinai's ; and, with very few exceptions, I do believe the alone theme of “ Christ, and him crucified,” to be a clearer manifestation of the wisdom, holiness, and love of God, than any other that can be produced. Calvary ! wondrous Calvary ! what may we not learn from thee ! My Saviour's dying groans sound far louder than the thunders of Sinai ; that eye dimmed with tears,

is far more fearful than all the fiery flashes and lightnings of the law; that agonized look of the mighty God, more awfully shows me my deserts, than every memorial I can find of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And when I have read this solemn lesson, blessed Calvary whispers, nay, proclaims aloud, comforts, blessings, of which no other tongue can speak. Here the despairing debtor sees the last farthing of his tremendous debt paid down; here, he who looks on everlasting burnings as his well deserved abode, sees heaven purchased for him, and bound over to him by unalienable rights. Here, the desolate find a husband, a brother, a saviour; here, the mourner finds a hand to wipe away all tears; here, the wounded find a balm and a good Physician; here, the weary may lay down their burden, and take rest to their souls; here are mines, whose unsearchable riches eternity will not exhaust.

. . . . Dear Mr. S—— occupies many of my thoughts, and I could hope has almost taught me more in this dispensation than in all that I have seen, known, or heard of him before. “Cease ye from man,” is indeed very deeply described on this illness; and the heart which ran too eagerly to the cistern, learns to say, and in a larger degree to feel, “my soul, wait thou *ONLY* upon God, for my expectation is from *him*.” The physicians are still of the same opinion, that his recovery is quite impossible; but this is a word not known in the courts of heaven; it vanishes like smoke in the path of Omnipotence. May all his flock be

strong in faith, and not tie the hands of a wonder-working God by vile unbelief; those are fearful words, "He could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief."

. . . . My plans are not yet settled: yet all is settled, and I am thankful to say I am little concerned either way. I have great reason to love this vineyard indeed; but I trust I could work with equal satisfaction for my beloved Master, in one where I did not meet with so much *present* harvest.

LETTER XXXV.

TO THE SAME.

January 14th. 1818.

. I WAS beginning to wonder what I could have to talk about, till a greater astonishment, that there could be any demur on the subject, has usurped the place of the former wonder. "They that feared the Lord spake OFTEN one to another." They that love the Lord are at a loss what to say concerning him once in seven days! "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" Have I not, in this space of time, found one fresh charm in him, whose ever-growing loveliness eternity will not exhaust? What, not one token of tenderness, not one mark of faithfulness and truth! Hath he not once cast the mantle of forgiveness over my drowsy soul, and pleaded the cause of her who has

grieved him? Hath he not once proved himself my shield, and warded off many deadly blows from me? Hath he not once taught my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, so that even a bow of steel hath been broken by me? Hath he not entertained me once at his banqueting house, and unfurled the banner of love over me? When earthly friends all proved miserable comforters, hath he not whispered peace, and given me rest on the very bosom I have pierced? Tell me, if ye can, ye wondering ministering spirits, what could have been done for me, which my Jesus hath not done! Tell me, whether ye most wonder at his love, or at my ingratitude! Because he thus CONTINUALLY loadeth me with benefits, shall I become insensible of the load? Surely a cup of cold water would force hallelujahs from the parched tongues of accursed souls, and make the bottomless abyss ring with new sounds; and I, who richly deserve to be under those chains of darkness for ever, feel so little gratitude, not for a cup of cold water, but for a cup of blessing which runneth over with the tenderest love of One who was slain for me. But how gloriously attuned to the sweetest chorus of heaven shall this cold, stammering tongue very, very soon be! And oh, when I shall realize these things; when I shall review that hole of the pit where we all by nature were; when I shall look back upon the days in which I could hug my chains as fondly as any one of these poor souls, and was as greedy of destruction, surely heaven itself cannot produce a song that would speak all that I should feel; I, who was more closely allied by nature and by practice to these

~~created beings~~, than any one in the courts of heaven. Sometimes my heart burns a little even here, and I should like to commune with a fellow-pilgrim on these glorious subjects.

. . . . It appears as if it were necessary that I should still be kept in suspense as to my plans. Oh, may my own will be beaten about until it be in some measure subdued! What does not the Searcher of hearts discover in me of all that is most vile! Yet, blessed be God, amidst these contrary winds, these boisterous waves, I am enabled heartily and sincerely to invite my precious Pilot to take the rudder into his own hands. I can feel thankful that it is not in me to spread one sail, to steer one point, north or south, east or west. I am thankful that however nature may shrink, grace still loudly proclaims, and joyfully feels, that I *am* not, I *would* not be, my own; that I desire to magnify my beloved Lord, whether it be by life or by death. I know you will think of me, and pray for me. If my God has prepared any work for me in that rich harvest field, pray that I may be clothed with humility. I hope you will fear every thing and nothing for me; the first will lead you to pray; the second will give you boldness in prayer; and according to your faith be it unto you, and to me. . . .

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

H——d, January 28th, 1818.

It is long since I talked to you, and my poor naughty heart has been more full of you than ever; but blessed be God, I am so assured that it would not be well for me to have always such fellow travellers, that, while nature keenly feels the separation, my spirit rejoices and is thankful. With travellers whose views, pursuits, feelings, tempers, &c. so peculiarly are blended and in unison, the waste howling wilderness is made to smile, a lowering sky is forgotten, the pilgrims linger by the way, and refreshed with present enjoyment, press not on so eagerly to the pastures of rest and refreshing.

. . . . I had a delightful journey, and may truly say of these, as of the many other miles I have passed over, "Mercy embraced me on every side." My visit at —— was disarmed of its terrors!. My precious Lord was with me, and I felt a protector, a husband, a teacher, and I think I may truly say, I felt but one fear, that of not being a faithful spouse unto him. He who creates the fruits of the lips enabled me to say a few words.

. . . . What poor things are the very chiefest of the Lamb's followers! how astonishingly is the precious spark of grace dimmed by the corruption of the atmosphere in which it exists, and often even

hid under nature's rubbish! What an every moment miracle it is that keeps it alive! What a depth of love which can stoop so low, and rest in sweet complacency in such an abode! And, oh, how glorious a change, how blessed an emancipation, when those who have laboured under the image of the earthy, shall bear the image of the heavenly! I could hope the defilement, the mixture of bitters I find in the purest streams, leads me more eagerly to the blessed Fountain. I could hope my dearest Lord is becoming more lovely in mine eyes, more precious. When expectation returns disappointed, hopes blasted, desires frustrated in the pursuit of earthly idols, they rest on One, whom to know more is to love more; of whom to expect largely, is to be fully satisfied. What a mercy that he will allow so roving a heart to rest upon him! a heart which has willingly submitted to have so many other lords, rulers over it, and would be content with their sway, could it but find peace under them.

. . . . The schisms within the walls of Zion seem to cry aloud, "Cease ye from man:" disappointed of the peace I once expected to find within her walls, I pant for that blessed place where I shall know even as I am known, where every shadow shall flee away, and there shall be no more night. My Jesus is the only one with whom I venture to hold full and free communion, the only Counsellor to whom I dare to apply. I could hope he is becoming more and more precious unto me. I do find a peace, a rest, in him which passes all understanding, all the powers of language to express.

.... "The experience meeting" was very dull and dead on Tuesday, and almost sickened me of the sort of thing. They seemed to have been brooding over, and almost creating, some little trouble, to the exclusion of every thought of the mercy and loving-kindness hourly received. Were I to institute an experience meeting, it should be for raising Ebenozers. Soldiers should tell of the glorious exploits of their Captain; the tempted, of the strength of their shield; the sick, of the tenderness of their nurse; the afflicted, of the sweetness of their comforter; the fainting, of the strength of everlasting arms;—ALL, of the mercy of being out of everlasting burnings. Surely this would bring more glory to God, more strength and encouragement to man! surely this would be more of a foretaste of heaven.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

H——d, March 15th, 1818.

.... I FEAR I begin to use you very ill, my dearest F——; but in this place there is so much to be done, I cannot find time for much writing. Death has been very present to my mind of late; I have seen the dying and the dead; many whom I have visited have been removed to their long homes; the mourners go about the streets. Some alas! who rejected the message of God from his poor servant, to hear him speak

in a far, far more awful manner ; and oh, that my poor words may not increase their condemnation ! Others, I trust, have fallen asleep in Jesus, and will awake up fully satisfied in his likeness. Some happy ones I am now attending, whose tempest-tossed, shattered barks have nearly reached the haven where they would be, where the weary are at rest : others, alas ! “dying, to DIE.” May I live as one who stands on the threshold of eternity, who is daily beholding her fellow pilgrims stepping in ; who is seeing the doors of time close upon so many around her. And oh, may I live as one who, in the twinkling of an eye, may be in the immediate presence of the holy Lord God, in company with the first-born and the spirits of just men made perfect ; may I live as one who is already a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God. I do hope that of late this world has been displayed to me more clearly than ever in its true colours. “I would not live away ;” *in itself* I see not, I feel not, *one* attraction. As a little stage, where I can perform a part for my dearest Lord, even a part which angels never had committed to them, I value it. As a field, where a battle is fought for the best of Captains, I would not be impatient to leave it. Lord, thou knowest my weakness ; I say I *would* not, but my secret impatience is not hid from thee. Oh, enable me to tarry thy leisure, to wait all the days of my appointed time on earth, until my unspeakably blessed change come. Yes, Lord, if I can glorify thee more on earth than in heaven, welcome life, welcome this absence from thee whom my soul

loveth. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast devised
 *means that thy banished be not expelled from thee for
 ever: yet a little while, and I shall be with thee,
 shall be full of rest, yea, and find it sweeter for the
 toil and weariness of the days of the years of my
 pilgrimage. Pray for me, that the Lord may be mag-
 nified by me, whether it be by life or by death.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

H—d, March 21st, 1818.

I TOLD you, when last I wrote, that death was very
 present with me. Since that time, I have been called
 upon *to hold yet nearer communion with the har-
 binger of that bright, that perfect, that eternal day,
 for which my soul pants. I have been called upon
 more closely to examine that key, which, held in
 a Redeemer's pierced hand, gently unlocks the prison
 doors, and sets the captive free. I must, however,
 to set your heart at rest, begin by telling you that
 I am now almost quite well. On Sunday I was
 enabled to go up to the courts of the house of my God.
 Oh how did my feet then long to stand within thy
 gates, my better Jerusalem! how did my soul thirst for
 that eternal sabbath, where no weakness of body, no
 pollution of soul, shall damp my hallelujahs! I fear I
 was rather impatient, and yet, blessed be the God of all

grace, I was enabled to feel it a heaven to *suffer* his will here. I could owe a lengthened pilgrimage, when appointed by that precious Lord, who truly doeth all things well. That bed cannot be wearisome which is made by Emmanuel ; no state can be uneasy when his tenderness and power are revealed for our support ; and truly his left hand hath been under my head, his right hand hath embraced me. If he has honoured me, by preparing one more work for me, assuredly this tabernacle cannot be taken down ere it be performed. If I have been engaged about other vineyards, to the neglect of my own, this gently restraining hand will not be taken off, until he have discovered unto me the lurking, loathsome weed, until the spices flow forth more abundantly, the drooping flowers be watered and tied up ; (oh that some precious lilies might spring up!) and my Beloved can come down, and walk in his garden with yet greater delight. It is my joy to be assured that God in ALL things SHALL be glorified ; it is my privilege to trust him, where, to human reason, his footsteps are not known, and I will lisp my testimony here, as I shall shout it hereafter, that not *one* thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord my God spake concerning me ; goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. As to the struggle with natural feelings, in the contemplation of death, I must confess, my beloved sister, that you cost me most ; I grieved lest you should grieve, lest you should feel the want of your poor little nurse. Oh what a mercy did I feel it that I had not many strong ties to break ; that I had but one home, into which death would usher

me! Circumstanced as I am, to live would indeed be *only* Christ, to die must be inconceivable gain. . . .

. . . . I was able to get to church in a sedan yesterday; we had good, but not very animated sermons; in the morning, "Behold the man!" in the evening, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Dear H——y was so peculiarly low, from a sense of the awful state of the unconverted, he could scarcely refrain from tears during the sermon. Ah, love, we shall not often keep the feast thus! no bitter herbs at that heavenly table; no need to gird up our loins on that golden pavement; no more occasion for shoes in those green pastures; no more want of a staff!

LETTER XXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

H——d, March 31st, 1818.

I FEAR my beloved F—— finds a decay of punctuality as to my weekly letters; but blessed be God! I trust there is none as to my morning, noon-day, and evening remembrances of her, my beloved brother and their precious child. . . . Here I have met with the sweetest encouragement, and almost find it difficult not to question my all-wise God as to his mode of proceeding with his vilest tool. My heart is ready to say, Lord, why all this present harvest? why no trial of my patience, faith, and real love to thy service? why

are not my motives, my zeal, my forwardness, more tried and sifted? but oh! I hate the horrid suggestion; shall not the Lord do what he will with his own? shall the axe reply to him who heweth therewith? If he chose to make bare his holy arm, to make known the excellency of his power, shall I say him nay? shall I dictate with what speed he shall work? shall I command the seasons and put off his appointed weeks of harvest? shall the wind blow when and where I list? Ah, F——y, vain man would be wise, but, oh blessed Lord! make me to become a fool, that I may be wise; make me to lie passive in thy hand, and know no will but thine. Use me as thou wilt, when thou wilt, where thou wilt; success may make my path slippery, but hold thou me up, and I *shall* be safe; though on a pinnacle of the spiritual temple, place thine everlasting arms beneath me, and I shall not dash my foot against a stone; and as for the trial of my graces, thou who didst take me out of the hole of the pit, and moulded me according to thy good pleasure; thou who art daily and hourly painting such graces and ornaments on my soul as shall make me a vessel fitted for thy use, thou knowest when to put these graces in the furnace, and to make the gold shine forth. Thanks be to God! I am enabled on this to dwell, my Jesus doeth *all* things well. O how much of heaven does he give me here! I *do* sit under his shadow with *great* delight, and were there no other heaven than what I now enjoy, it would more, much more than repay me for the struggle through the narrow gate, for the seed time of bitter tears, for every battle

I am now called upon to fight. . . . Thank you for your letter. Ah, don't call upon me to bless your God, the angel who has fed you, guided you, redeemed you: my heart is pained within me that I *cannot* thank him as I would, no, not even for *myself*. I long for the wings of a dove, that I may go and appear before him, and let him read in my soul more than eternal hallelujahs can express. I long to tell all the angels what he has done for me, and to draw sweeter, stronger notes of praise from them. But what do I say? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest I desire to love thee, I desire to praise thee. Ye ministering spirits, ye know *something* of what he has done; ye ministered to a starving, tempted King of glory; ye ushered him unto a stable, ye saw him sweat great drops of blood; made a little lower than yourselves, ye beheld the Lord of life, enclosed within the bars of death; ye behold him now, reigning in our likeness; ye see him as a lamb slain for worms. Oh then, though the thousandth part is not yet told you, praise him for the glorious things which ye have looked into! O ye that excel in strength, praise the Lord for us. We shall soon join you, we shall soon have a nobler song to sing than you. . . .

. . . . If the good husbandman sees it necessary that I should tend his plants once more, he can immediately supply me with strength; if he does not, well do I know his dear hand will better accomplish the work. I can entirely leave this part of the matter with him . . . therefore arrange as you like, my beloved F——y, and the Lord be your guide, and counsellor, and wisdom. Pray for me, that I may be passive in his hand,

and know no will but his; pray, that in whatsoever state, place, or circumstances, the life that I live may be by the faith of the Son of God; that the Lord alone may be exalted by me, his ransomed worm, that Christ may be all in all to me, and that friends, relations, comforts, blessings, may be nothing to me without him. . . . I find from what you say, that that *self-exalting* letter of mine was too much in unison with those vain-gloryings and proud boastings with which I have, alas, often made that heart sad, which the Lord would not have sad. It was not that speaking of what the *Lord* had done, of which the humble hear, and are *glad*; it was speaking of what frames, feelings, &c. &c., had done, which robs God of his glory, and discourages and depresses the fellow pilgrim.

I am very much better, and I begin to hope that my God is preparing more work for me. It is sweet to live, if it is to serve him. I do feel happily reconciled, and I hope I may say nothing distresses me but the fear of grieving my beloved. A continued hot furnace, nay, if I know my own desires at all, any thing and every thing I would prefer to this. O that the life he has so very often brought back from the gates of the grave may be wholly and solely consecrated to him! I know I need not say to you, pray and praise for me.

LETTER XL.

TO R. R. AND F. M. R.

October 22d, 1818.

HITHERTO hath the Lord helped me; you will, I know, thank him for it. It is often my joy to know that there are *some* souls to love and praise him, when I am forced to mourn over the coldness and ingratitude of my own. Oh, what a heaven to sit on the threshold of his courts above, hearing myriads praising the Lamb that was slain, seeing thousand thousands flying on wings of love to serve him. Yet a few more rough roads, a few more of the poor inns the wilderness can offer, and there I shall be. . . . This has been a blessed birthday to me; a sweet remembrance that I am but a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. I could feel ashamed to say how much I felt at parting with you, my dearest brother and sister; but how wonderful is that love which builds up a precious furnace of our very infirmities, and makes them the means of purifying the sons of Levi. Had not my weakness been so great, I should have escaped a little trial which I do hope has brought the Son of God to walk more closely with me, or I should say, has enabled me to realize his presence more, and which I trust has weakened, if not burnt off, some of the bonds wherewith my soul was fettered. When I look round my little room here, scarcely believing that neither of you nor any fellow-pilgrim is near me, what is it

makes my heart ache, and my tears flow? Truly the parent of every sorrow is *sin*. Had I looked around as anxiously for my beloved Lord, and desired his company as much when enjoying that of my earthly friends, I should not now feel alone; and in parting with you, what is it weighs so heavily on my mind? It is *sin*—time unimproved, opportunities lost, privileges slighted; indeed, I cannot find that my God has placed real sorrow on any thing but that which has the stamp of *sin*. Oh, how I felt it this day last year, when following the dust of my beloved C—— to the ground. But there is a day coming, when the tears even over *pardoned* sin shall be wiped away for ever. But I shall write a sermon instead of a letter. My poor unworthy lips have been enabled to proclaim my Master's precious salvation to some poor souls to-day.

LETTER XLI.

To F. M. R.

October 26th, 1818.

Oh, my beloved F——, when shall we come to appear before God, and sing as we would the song of Moses and the Lamb! when will ten thousand times ten thousand join us in the blessed chorus without one jarring sound; when will our poor hearts no more tire, our

stammering tongues be loosed, the hands that too often hang down raise their last, their eternal Ebenezer, and the whole soul and body and spirit be consecrated a holy, lively, and acceptable sacrifice! Can we but thirst and pant for this happy time, loaded as we are with benefits, bankrupts as we are as to our returns for them.

But I must tell you of my proceedings. The change indeed was great from your happy house , but my Lord was not absent. Oh, that I could tell what he is to me. Truly, he keeps me under his feathers, draws me nearest to himself when every thing would combine to drive me from him, and makes my hours of trial my happiest hours. Sunday morning, set off early to the school; it appeared as though a wolf had got in and scattered my flock; *my* flock, but not the *Lord's* flock. But for a little while my flesh and my heart failed me, when I thought of the halting ones to be gathered in, the sick to be bound up, the stragglers to be searched out who have wandered over the mountains in the cloudy and dark day. I could have said, who is sufficient for these things? but my comforter did not leave. I scarcely knew where I was as Mr. B——u walked round and round the class, and then seated himself close behind me. But my God knew where I was, and what I had to do; he gave me in the same hour what I should speak, for truly it was not I who spoke. Oh, trust him; he is a *tried* stone, wisdom, a mouth, strength to his people. I was not equal to going to church again; but, indeed, I think I enjoyed more at home over Jeremiah xxxiii., than I have

done during the very many happy Sundays under what appeared so much richer means of grace. What a table can our Beloved spread for us in the presence of all our enemies, food which angels have not tasted !

LETTER XLII.

TO THE SAME.

October 31st, 1818.

BEING driven in by one of those rainy afternoons of which, my precious fellow-pilgrim, we used to think so little, I cannot forbear beginning a letter to you. I most anxiously looked for tidings from you. How long shall vile, distrustful thoughts find a lodging in a heart so crowded with Ebenezers and memorials of unvaried loving-kindnesses and tenderest mercies ! I am not surprised at your being so much pleased with Mr. C——. There was a detachment from the world in his look and manner, and an apparent forgetfulness of every thing but his God, that did very much strike me. It is rarely that you see the temples of the Holy Ghost shining as they ought to do, and reflecting the glory and beauty of their blessed inhabitant. I do love to see a countenance shine like one just come down from the mount. I should like the world to be able to take knowledge of all the children of God, that they had been with Jesus. How much would the manner, air, and appearance of a poor beggar be altered, that had

frequent and familiar intercourse with those in higher life. How soon may that believer be discovered who has frequent and close communion with the Father of spirits, who often treads the courts of the King of kings, and holds converse with his fellow-citizens in Zion. How would his garments smell of the perfume of that court, where the name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth. How dim would every earthly object appear in those eyes which had been gazing on the King in his beauty. How would vain and trifling subjects languish on that tongue which had been accustomed to such high and holy converse. Ah! while I write, every word condemns myself. Truly, it is far, far easier to say what a believer *should* be, than to be that believer. Oh, that I may in all things be formed for the praise of the glory of that grace which hath made me accepted in the Beloved!

You will be wishing to know how we are going on here. Look which way I will, I have nothing to recount but mercies. In bodily health I am better than I ever expected to be again on this side Jordan. In soul, likewise, I trust I am a little invigorated. I could mourn to think what a poor dying creature I was, both in soul and body, whilst with you; but that I *do* feel Jesus has done all things *so* well. It will be a season to be much remembered by me: it does yield peaceable fruits now, though, indeed, at the time it was not joyous. What an every-moment miracle it is which keeps the little spark of grace alive amidst the oceans of corruption around; that preserves the new-born babe amidst the thousand various arrows of death which fly

by day and by night, and threaten its destruction. How *very* much endeared (we should imagine) must Jesus be to an old pilgrim, after having stood, by him in so many difficulties, supported him in so many trials, soothed him in so many sorrows, brought him so often out of the mire and clay, led him through so many mysterious paths, and, above all, borne with him in so many aggravated offences; how *very*, *very* precious ought Jesus to be to *such* a pilgrim! I would not veil a present want of love with the flattering hope of what my heart *would* feel in such a case; I doubt not I have met with more than many of the oldest pilgrims have met with, to knit my heart to the Lord, and it is my shame and grief that it is still so little his. Yet, though I mourn over the loss of that ardour, that fervency, which marked the time of my first love, I hope I may say, every step I take increases my *confidence* in my beloved Guide, and that quiet waiting upon him which I so much desire. Should he not see good to lead me through many more paths in this waste howling wilderness, and greatly to increase my love towards him here, he will lead me about Zion, and beside streams of living waters, and then I know my heart shall be full of love, and my mouth of praise.

LETTER XLIII.

TO THE SAME.

November 11th, 1818.

..... I FEAR you will be looking out for your* Sunday help: when will you, my beloved sister, consent to throw these crutches away? Why should you distrust your Almighty helper? I do believe a peculiar blessing rested on your instructions, for you possess what is far more valuable than eloquence, animation, or lively imagination, even that sense of weakness in which the power of Christ is glorified. Why will you not be content to glory in that wherein the chiefest Apostle gloried, even your infirmities? Have you not had many sweet and encouraging proofs that when you are weak, then are you strong? I am aware that these truths are pleasanter in theory than in practice. We are proud, independent creatures, and would fain have a storehouse of our own, and not live as beggars and bankrupts all our days; but he who knows what is in man, knows how necessary it is for him that he should be kept daily waiting at the post of his gates, and be made deeply sensible that in him are hid ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that from *his* fulness, and his only, can we all receive grace for grace, favour heaped upon favour. Having ventured to give you these few hints,

* She had been in the habit of sending a few remarks on the lessons repeated in the schools.

you must tell me your opinion, and let me know if I am still to continue my little weekly assistance. What *true* pleasure it gives me in any way to lend a helping hand, and thus to have the honour and privilege of being a fellow-labourer in feeding the lambs of my beloved Shepherd, I trust I need not tell you. My only question is, "Am I in God's stead?" I cannot help fearing I have often stood in this place to you, and my poor, vain, weak heart has been pleased, and proud of being God's rival.

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE SAME.

November, 1818.

..... I AM, indeed, delighted to hear that your congregation increases. I believe there is no food more profitable for the aged poor than children's food. Their minds, from not having been at all nourished or exercised, have not grown with their bodies, and their intellects are far better calculated to digest what we give to children, than the stronger meat which we are too apt to administer. I pray that all who hear you may become little children in deed and in truth. It is a glorious door of usefulness, my beloved sister, and one for which I doubt not you will eternally rejoice and give thanks; and those who have heard you speak in weakness, and in fear and in much trembling, shall soon become your joy and crown of rejoicing. Though

the treasure is committed unto you in an earthen vessel, whose weakness now causes you to mourn, yet ere long, you shall rejoice over it, and acknowledge that there was no mistake, no want of wisdom in the choice and structure of the vessel; that it was the one exactly suited to the great Potter's work, and well calculated to be the vehicle of the oil and gladness into the vessels which he had afore prepared unto glory.

LETTER XLV.

TO THE SAME.

1818.

..... How much of heaven does it bring into the soul when, with the rejoicing saints there, we can say, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." To know that *every* event, even those which appear most contrary, form necessary and important wheels in the grand and mysterious affairs of his government; that he, whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, is King over senators, counsellors, and powers, and turns their consultations which way soever he pleaseth; that the hearts of all are in his hand; he can say to one, go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh. Does the foe rage against the walls of Zion? The Lord hath bidden him: it may be to arouse the slumberers, and call the soldiers to their watch-tower. Do schisms and divisions rage within her gates? It

is that it may be made manifest who are the traitors that have crept in. Do her inhabitants faint in the streets? The Lord hath left them, that they may know their weakness, and that the power of Christ may be the more glorified. If then, we have so wise, so tender a King, why are not continued hallelujahs heard in Zion; why go her citizens mourning all the day long; wherefore look they so dismayed, so cast down? Is it not that the blessed truth is but little believed, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth?" The voice of dismal unbelief sounds through her streets, "The enemy reigneth, false brethren reign, my corruptions reign." I do in my own experience find this the secret spring of all my disquietude. *Suffer*, my soul does, and *must*, from wounds and weakness; but dejected and cast down it would not be, were that truth more deeply impressed, that these very things are but servants of my King, commissioned by him, that they will perform all his pleasure, and that that pleasure is to make me a partaker of his joy and glory. Well then may the children of Zion be called upon to rejoice in their King.

LETTER XLVI.

To R. R.

F——e, November, 1818.

As we have the prospect of a frank, I shall be able to write to you. I have longed to assure you of my

gratitude for all your kindness and patience towards me for so very long a time, a time in which I was a burden to myself, and therefore felt that I must be so to others; to all except that precious Friend, who loveth at ALL times, who has a place for us in his bosom at seasons when the bosom of hell appears too good for us; he loves to hear and sympathize in sorrows which would weary and disgust the tenderest of earthly friends; he dresses with tenderness and care wounds which would be loathsome to any other physician, and pours oil and wine into many which are unscen and unpitied by any other eye.

Though labouring under a depression of spirits, of which you, I dare say, can form no idea; though often only content to drag through the present day, from the hope that the next would be spent in heaven; or in moments when my mind was yet more worn, only wishing that the clods of the valley might receive body and soul too for ever; yet even then was I enabled to feel, and oh that it may be my dying testimony to the best of guardians, the tenderest of friends, "Jesus doeth all things well." In this season and by this little trial, I trust more of his name was proclaimed to me, more of his goodness caused to pass before me; the strength and excellency of that power were displayed, by which alone I am kept unto salvation; the beauty of that patience and long-suffering was exhibited which no provocation can wear out, no worthlessness exhaust; the strength of that love was manifested, which many waters of neglect and indif-

ference cannot quench; the glorious majesty of that arm was more revealed to me, which could keep so bruised 'a reed from being utterly trampled under foot by the enemy, which could lift up my head in the most overwhelming hour, and enable me to say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; though I fall I shall arise, though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." I know not that this my blessed confidence was overclouded for two minutes, for the Lord was my sun, as well as my shield. Say then, beloved brother, how much ought Jesus to be endeared to me. No, you cannot say; highest angels, tell if you can; no, this is love you have never known, never tasted of; here are depths of unsearchable riches which you cannot fathom. O that my heart did but more feel it! O that my life did but make more suitable returns!

..... I do indeed rejoice, I desire to be thankful on your behalf, that the Lord hath enabled you to offer yourself, and all you have, willingly, after this sort. May you feel yet more and more that all things, even this very willingness, cometh of God, and that of his own alone have you given him. To be fellow-workers with God in building up that Zion in which he will take his rest for ever, is no small honour; and truly, those who are engaged in so great and glorious a work, may well say to every other call upon their time, thoughts and affections, "I cannot come down—why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?" and though they send to us again and again after this sort, were we duly im-

pressed with the glory and blessedness of the work in which we are engaged, we should answer them again and again, "after the same manner." May our daily and hourly concern be, what can I do more for the glory of God, and the good of Zion? Were this question oftener put to our great Employer, I believe he would find us many fresh employments, and we should fill up more usefully many portions of our time. I am too apt to be my own chooser and appointer of work, and having got into stated jobs, remain tolerably satisfied, without inquiring what more could be done, or what could be done *better*. To arouse myself from this formality, this drowsiness in the work, I have found it profitable to realize, at the close of the day, the setting in of that night when no man can work. I can then discover many neglected opportunities, which before I had not seen—many calls upon my most vigilant exertions, which I had not before heard—much *stolenness* in the work I had accomplished, which had not before struck me. Such meditations are painful, but they are profitable; and oh, what a mercy to have these things discovered to us before the evening has indeed shut in—before the workman is called to the bar, to give an account of his labour! My manner of life has lately been very favourable for these inquiries—my departure from every place has been like the close of my day's work for that spot,—for those souls, for that part of Zion; and how much have I found to grieve and pain me at the close of these days! how much work left undone! how much, yea, *all*, performed negligently! what fruitless wishes to alter and amend! . . . There

is something to me exceedingly awful in Ezek. iii. 18, 19, &c. I was reading it a day or two since, and could scarcely have believed how guilty I was, and what an awful responsibility lay upon me, until I had gone round again and again in my mind my large circle of relations, friends, and neighbours. Pray for me, my dear brother, that I may be more faithful, and enabled to "*deliver my soul*" from the awful guilt which my cowardice brings upon it. I am frightened when I look at the expression, *deliver my soul*. Oh, if the least jot or tittle of the work were left to me! But "*my Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name; he shall thoroughly plead my cause;*" and my iniquity shall be sought for, and shall not be found; and my sins, and there shall be none. What words for a worm, a *heap of sins*, like me, to take up! Yet these *are*, these *must* be, my song all the day, if I would go on in the work of my God. These nerve the arm, encourage the fainting soul; and every soldier who is enabled to war a good warfare, must confess that the joy of the Lord is his strength.

Thank you much for the brief account of the many things which have taken place since I left you. I fear something like half a desire has for a moment crept in, to have been a sharer in some of your privileges and honours; but, blessed be God, I am not much troubled with any thing in the shape of a wish. If ever confidence in a guide could be won by the most marked, unvaried wisdom, tenderness, and love, what confidence does not my guide deserve; yet he who leads, must scatter this peaceful treasure in my path, or all the

stock which I have supposed I have gathered, in my long walk with him, will in a moment vanish.

. . . . I am greatly distressed at your report of N—— It is a comfort to me to think that all you have given him was as to the Lord, as to one of the household of faith; thus, though apparently ill-bestowed on the individual, it is laid out on usury, and shall be restored a hundred-fold. How I should spurn such a sentence as that, were it not my Lord's. Do you not think, from the fear of pharisaical poison, we debar ourselves of honey that is wrapped up in words like these?

LETTER XLVII.

To F. M. R.

February 19th, 1819.

THANK you for giving me matter of praise and prayer, by making me acquainted with the Lord's dealings with you. . . . Indeed, I know not how to feel uneasy about you, whilst I hear One, in whom are hid all the treasures of good and blessedness, saying, "I will not turn away from her, from doing her good." What can I ask for, what can I require more? As to the danger of infection, should I hear the voice of my Shepherd calling me that way, the danger would be no danger to me, assured, that whatever were the issue, he must lead me by a right way. . . .

When I see so many, even of the children of God, shrinking from every thing which appears like the key of our prison, what rich grace is that which has made us rid of all our fears, and given us to trust and not be afraid. The first account you gave me of poor ——'s alarm, made me feel something of a bitter spirit toward her: The chapter which came in turn was 2 Kings vi., and it was much brought home to me; the conduct of Elisha towards his poor, fearful servant—no reproofs, no boastings, no impatience—but prayer for him that he might see what he saw, and rejoice in it.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

P——y, March 16th, 1819.

Do not be alarmed by my date, by fancying I am again driven here for change of air: no, I would call upon you to join with me in praising our God for all that he has done and is doing for me. When I lay down last night, without a pain or ailment in body, and free from any anxiety or distress of mind, and recollected with what a harassed soul and suffering body I tossed to and fro on the same bed last year, I did want every thing that bath breath to adore my precious Guide, Guardian, Comforter; I did desire to

raise an altar to God, even God my exceeding joy, and to sacrifice unto him my whole soul, body, and spirit: but truly, when I would do good, evil is present with me. High and solemn is the work on which he hath sent me hither; yet how much is there utterly loathsome in my performance of it! self-seeking, vain-glory, anxiety to win souls to *self*, as well as to my Master: instead of a humble "who hath made me to differ?" a self-applauding "God, I thank thee." Ah, well! it will but be the more to the praise of the glory of that grace, which can effectually work in the midst of such oceans of corruption; and which shall make, yea, which *has* made, more than conqueror. . . .

We have been taking a long country walk this evening. These bursting buds, rejoicing birds, &c., do bring my beloved F——y very much before me. Do you not find something very solemnizing in spring? I can meet with no one who can sympathize in these feelings; all declare it to be exhilarating, animating, dissipating. I believe it is that I realize more the presence of God; his glory is displayed in the resurrection of nature, while every little bud and flower says, "The finger of God is here." All bears testimony to his faithfulness and long-suffering. Again the face of the world is to be renewed for the sake of his blood-bought people; again the earth is to yield her increase to Jezreel, and the sun in the firmament is commissioned to give more light to favour the dressers of his vineyard. All seems to say, what manner of persons *ought* ye to be? and reproachfully to add, but *such* ye are not. Perhaps, too, there is

~~something like impatience~~ for my own resurrection; a fuller resurrection with Christ in spirit now, and that blessed resurrection in his perfect likeness hereafter, when this weak and corruptible seed shall be raised in power and incorruption.

LETTER XLIX.

TO THE SAME.

F——c, September 29th, 1819.

I DO feel ashamed and overwhelmed as I sit down to tell you of the Lord's mercies towards me; and scarcely can I believe that such showers of them have been bestowed on a heart which remains so barren and unfruitful. Dear, precious Lord! how does he labour, as it were, to draw me with cords of strongest love, while I keep following after many lovers! When I was dictating to him that I deserved nothing but to be frowned upon, rejected, turned out of the vineyard, he has caused some of his most cheering rays to break forth upon me, revived me, and given me to follow hard after him, inquiring if he will once again employ me, whilst he makes me more willing to sit still, if it be his pleasure. I hope I feel something of a return of life in my soul, something more than the mere pulse of natural feeling and excitation, though, doubtless, it is much mixed. You will guess by whom this season of refreshing from the pre-

sence of the Lord came, by one who lives in the secret of his pavilion, who leans upon the bosom of his beloved Lord, our dear friend, Mr. S——t. When we meet, in whichever world it be, I may tell you of the crowds of mercies manifested at this time The blessing has, I hope, been much sweetened to me, while the hand which was pierced to be filled with gifts for the rebellious, was thus evidently displayed We found dear Mr. S——t with his mouth filled with praise, even the high praises of our God. He gave us the whole account of the Lord's dealings with him, bursting forth at every interval, "He's *very* good: I used to think him very kind when he afforded me help in the ministry, but I have known a thousand times more of his kindness since he laid me by: we don't know what a good God we have till we have tried him. How very sweet those trials, which bring us better acquainted with our dear Lord! how delightful to feel we *are* nothing, can *do* nothing; to be brought to rest simply upon the finished work. I must say, to his praise, that he has given me a great deal of heaven upon earth; and when I was unable to read, write, or converse, and could but lie upon the sofa, he gave me a sweet peace, an unruffled state of soul; in quietness and confidence is our strength. I conceive the happiness of the Christian to consist much in *meeting* the Lord in his providences, desiring that the Lord may make us perfect in every good work *to do his will*, and *to work* in us that which is *well pleasing* in his sight; then we must love and admire every thing we meet with." I asked him about his sermons;—the text, "To me to

live is Christ," &c. he seemed to be once more in his pulpit as he told us a little about it. "To live is Christ! as if the apostle saw every thing swallowed up in that; joy or grief, or whatever he met with, it was all Christ, and Christ in all: and oh with what pleasure did I look upon my people! The Lord has given me such great encouragement. I thought, he has done much for *my* children, and will he not take care of these, many of whom are his own children? Oh yes! it's a sweet life! He's *so* good! I am sure I have reason to speak well of him." He spoke very earnestly on the privileges of the ministry—the glorious calling of being mouth to the Lord—standing ever near him to know his will, beginning that heaven upon earth, described in the emphatic words, "his servants *serve* him: many vessels useful and honourable in a nobleman's house, some more immediately for his own use; so ministers are fitted for the *Master's* use: we have need to take shame that we are so little what we ought to be, but, indeed, it is a glorious office! others take prayer, praise, the Word of God, &c. at stated seasons; *we live* in these things, &c. I took the other side of the question, spoke of magistrates, &c. &c.; he said there was a use for every member of the body, and brought forward the sweet promises for direction, &c. &c.; he waited four years resting upon the promise, "He shall bring forth fruit *in his season.*"

LETTER L.

TO THE SAME.

W——r, Oct. 21st, 1819.

.... DEAREST F——y, this is the last day of my twenty-third year! My heart seems to bleed in every part, when I think what I *have* been, what I *should* have been; a plant so wonderfully brought out of Egypt, so mercifully hedged in, so tenderly watered! Alas! how often has my Beloved been disappointed of his pleasant fruit! Truly* all is not pleasant fruit to him which appears fruit: wild grapes bear much resemblance to the true, but are poisonous; and whilst Ephraim brings forth fruit *for himself*, he is considered as an empty vine. But I dare not tell you what I am, what I have been, lest you should construe my confessions into humility. Only pray for me, that I may be deeply humbled before my God, and lie in dust and ashes at the foot of Calvary. Sinai does not move me; if ever I am brought to mourn in sincerity, if ever to inquire earnestly what my Lord would have me to do, it must be when I can behold him as MY God, dying for *me*. What treasures ought years, days, and hours to be to us, when we consider for what purpose they are bestowed—that we may give a helping hand in building up that city, in which the Lord will delight to dwell for ever; in growing in conformity to the image of the altogether lovely One; in becoming vessels meet for the great Master's use; in treading in the blessed footsteps of

One whom angels cannot follow. Oh, that it may be indeed a new year to me! To *will* (thanks be to the ever blessed Spirit) is present with me. But why do I speak of a year? I would desire to enter on each day, each hour, as though I had but that day, that hour, remaining of my span. You who know not all the causes for mourning, and who see some of the very many for praise and thanksgiving, will, I trust, endeavour to give my God some of that tribute of praise which he so very justly deserves, for what he has been to me for three and twenty years.

LETTER LI.

TO THE SAME.

W—r, Oct. 25th, 1819.

I DID not dare to flatter myself you would remember the 22nd! I do thank you for your prayers and praises. I do believe my God smelled a sweet savour, and emptied out the censer in blessings upon me. To live in him, to him, for him, seemed the uppermost desire of my soul, though there were and are many vile, rebellious desires to keep under. How unspeakable a mercy, that the day which gave me birth is one on which I, my beloved friends, yea, my God can rejoice; when of such millions it will be said through eternity, "Good were it for that man if he had *never* been born!" I have not been on such a

smooth sea on this day for some years ; but who can tell what rocks and quicksands may be near ? Who ? my Pilot can, and he has pledged his all to convey me safely into the haven where I would be.

LETTER LII.

TO THE SAME.

W—r, Nov. 29th, 1819.

I CANNOT help fearing my too kind sister may be suffering something like uneasiness about me, when there is indeed cause for nothing but praise. I have got the hooping-cough, but very favourably. . . . And now what shall I say of my heavenly Physician, my Nurse, my Friend ? Oh, how tenderly does he sympathize in pains which others know not of ; how graciously does he alleviate sufferings whose extent is little suspected by others ! how unceasingly does he keep watch at night, when others are weary of you and can watch no longer ! How truly in this dispensation, as in every thing, does he do all things well ! We had been saying but a day or two before the cough came on, that my path did not appear quite plain, whether I ought to labour within doors or without. He has now been pleased to make it very plain ; and how can I thank him as I ought, that he has in both places prepared work for me ! What a privilege is it, that whilst I am sitting within the narrow compass of the walls of my little snug room,

weary and a weariness, unable to lift up my voice for my dear Master, he will yet vouchsafe to employ me in a work* which he gives me to hope shall speak for him when I am singing his praises above, and which shall call others into his service, when my day for labour shall have shut in. Blessed be his name, I can at all times feel this mercy and rejoice in this hope, though there are seasons when I could almost say, I have spent my strength in vain and for nought; but I know this is ungrateful, and a device of Satan. . . .

. . . . I trust I do feel more pleasantly weaned from every earthly tie, more thirsting for nearer and fuller communion with my infallible Counsellor, than ever I did before. I am almost afraid, that if it should please God to allow me to take a few more steps in this waste howling wilderness with you, I should again find that there are streams of which I can drink without any taste of bitter herbs. But my Jesus will do all things well; if it would be injurious to me, he will not suffer it. He *cannot* turn away from me from doing me good. Perhaps he will not suffer us to see each other again, until every infectious taint of sin be wiped away for ever.

I do rejoice and give thanks for the pleasant prospects now before you. Oh, may you love and serve more and more your gracious Guide; may every gift, every blessing, serve only to constrain your hearts more and more unto him and his service.

* Alluding to Scripture Stories, which she was then preparing for publication.

LETTER LIII.

TO THE SAME.

W——r, December 6th, 1819.

HAPPILY, I had not heard of your little darling's illness, ere I received your letter, which, through the tender mercy of our God, brought balm for the wound. I hope and think that it is not my partiality which gives me to believe that your dear children are the Lord's peculiar treasure, and that whether he take them very, very early in the morning, or leave them in the vineyard until the "even be come," they shall be his servants, and do his dear work. Ah! in what a moment might the precious little love have been enabled to do the will of her Father in heaven better than the most holy, the most devoted saint can do it here! Whilst we bind the Lord to his promises in that way in which he has pledged himself that he will be bound, whilst, with a holy violence, we constrain him to lay his hands upon the dear little ones, bless them, and make them his own for ever: when we have done this, may we be enabled to leave the rest to him, to let him choose in which world they shall serve him, to let him decide whether we shall keep the loan a day or a year, and be willing that our loved ones should rest in his bosom at that moment when it shall be meet for his glory. Writing thus on such a subject, how sweet is it to be able to add, "The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God."

.... My cough is now decided hooping-cough remember; there is nothing of inflammation, nor one alarming symptom. Only daily and hourly remembrances of a fact which we too often forget, that there is but the breath in one's nostrils between us and eternal realities. I hope views of eternity have been brought nearer to me; I hope I have been kept more clinging unto Jesus. Truly, truly he is all my salvation, and all my hope. We may plume ourselves upon our zeal, our gifts, our graces before men, but these drop off and fade away, when we realize entering into the immediate presence of our God. No covering but the true wedding garment, "*the Lord my righteousness,*" can give the soul quiet or joy in this anticipation. I do hope the Lord will give me to wish, not so much to get rid of the chastisement, as of that for which I have forced him unwillingly to chasten. I want to hear every word that the rod has to say; I hope I have heard a little; it tells me of a slumbering soul to be awakened, of a loitering soul to be pressed on, of a straying soul to be brought back, of idols to be thrown down, of an earthly heart to be purified, and of a too despotic, too powerful *self* to be dethroned. Oh, when I hear what it has to say, I wonder not that it is raised against me, but I wonder that its strokes are not millions of times heavier, and I seem to say, Lord, surely thou must never again remove thy rod, if thou wouldest make thy child partaker of thy holiness. But indeed I can scarcely call it a rod; no, it is a scourge made of the cords of love, and while he uses

it, I do but cling more closely to him, and see more of the reconciled, the loving Father in him. It is so sweet to rest in him and on him, when every other prop gives way.

LETTER LIV.

TO R. R. AND F. M. R.

W—r, December 14th, 1819.

JUDGING from myself, I cannot help thinking my too kind brother and sister will be wanting to hear how I am; and feeling, as I do, really better to-day, it is with pleasure I hasten to communicate what I know will give them pleasure. The worst certainly was not over when I wrote before; but whilst I found *unspeakably* much which needed purging from my soul, and that Spirit which maketh intercession according to the will of God, crying out within me for a riddance from my burden, I own I did not expect that my precious Refiner could, in very *faithfulness*, give me so speedy a release from my little sufferings; nay, I could almost have dictated to him to heat the furnace one seven times hotter than before. Though nature shrunk, yet the blessed Spirit within me did make me open my mouth, and pant for a conformity to my dear, dear Lord, in whatever way it might be brought about. Oh, did we know our true blessedness, our true privileges, we should not seek ease, we should not seek freedom from

sorrow; we should be covetous of any thing and every thing which drew a veil over present things, and rent asunder that which conceals eternal glories and realities from our view. We should be ambitious of walking in the footsteps of our beloved husband, who was emphatically called, "*A man of sorrows*;" we should dread flowery meads, and pleasant resting-places, and hail the stormy wind and tempest which makes us hasten on our way Zionwards, and press towards our only true rest. . . . I do assure you I think myself much better, and am beginning to say, "I shall not die, but live to declare the works of the Lord." What an *immense* privilege does this appear, when the time seems to be expired in which one may do it! . . .

LETTER LV.

To F. M. R.

W——r, December 21st, 1819.

As I have intelligence to communicate which will, I know, be pleasing to my precious sister, I will not delay one post. I may tell you, with thankfulness, that I am all but *well*. . . . I had the great delight of teaching a large class last Sunday, and am looking forward to a feast at the table of my precious Healer on Sunday. I do hope his tenderest mercies are vouchsafed in order to soften the hardest of hearts. I *can* say I do detest

and abhor myself more than ever ; and when I catch a little glimpse of what my God has been and is to me, I am nearly overwhelmed with the sight of the returns I have made and am making. Ah, we shall *indeed* be changed, when we can have all the love of our God revealed to us, a clear view of our journey through the wilderness, and yet sorrowing and sighing be far away ! when we shall, in open vision, follow the Lamb we have slain, and have no tear upon our eyes ; nay, when we can look with joy and thanksgiving upon the immensity of our accounts in the Lord's book, as that which magnifies the riches of his pardoning grace and love. From the battlements of heaven we may look with complacency upon the heaps of the slain, and see glory and honour accruing to our glorious Captain, in proportion as the enemy has been numerous and powerful. Thus shall " God in *all* things be glorified through Jesus Christ." I read in a work of Brooks " that which we pay most dearly for, we generally set the highest value upon, and prize proportionably ; may we not then conclude that the *greatest* sinners are the *most* precious of Christ's jewels ?" It is a very sweet thought for poor me. Surely none can have cost him so much, for none can he have suffered such agonies of soul ! Oh that out of the fulness of his love to me, he may shed abroad more and more love to him, in my heart, by the Holy Ghost !

LETTER LVI.

TO THE SAME.

W——r, Dec. 25th, 1819.

MY beloved sister, I want you to be thinking rightly of me next week, that you may know something of my wants, and be able to bear them to him who is able and willing to relieve. . . . I had no rest in my spirit till I had accepted the invitation; I felt as if I were turning aside from the cross, when there might be something to be done for Him who bore so heavy a one for me. Oh may my God forbid that I should ever do this! May he hedge up every gap, and pierce me with thorns, when I would force my way through! But you will, I know, remember the vilest fellow labourer in the vineyard, under rather a hot sun, with a weakly soul and body. I had thought to partake, with a large company of brothers and sisters, this day, of food which angels never tasted, at the King's table. But how often have I found, to my unspeakable mercy, that my God's thoughts are not my thoughts, and I cannot question its being so in this instance. I have had a return of my severe attacks, but my precious Physician has again vouchsafed a peculiar blessing to the means. . . . I know not when I have felt less alone than to-day. It is a mercy to be *forced*, as it were, into the realities of another world, to be stripped of the creature, and *compelled* to live upon the Creator. Shut out from the voice of man, I catch the sound of the angelic choir;

deprived of every brother and sister, I am enabled in a very small degree to realize the value of that Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Yet have I not that sensible comfort and communion with him which I have known in months that are past. It is more of a feeling after him, if haply I may find him such as I then found him. Blessed be he who seals assurance on the hearts of his people—I do know him to be mine; I can call him *Immanuel*, even when I feel not the comfort of it; yea, I would bless him that I do not always feel it; he knows when to administer, and when to withhold cordials; and I hope I desire to have that withheld, however *pleasant* and exhilarating, which I might make my strength and support in the place of Jesus. The present state of my soul is a quiet confidence rather than a lively joy. Oh, my beloved sister, how wonderful, that one moment of quietness, one ray of confidence, should have forced its way into such a soul! The lxxxvth Psalm, how wonderfully sweet! “Thou *hast* forgiven, thou *hast* covered, thou *hast* taken away,” &c. &c. That work must be a *finished, complete* work, on which a trembling soul will venture to rest. It would not satisfy me if any part of it remained to be done. I might fancy a thousand hindrances, and be like the dove on the unsettled waters. But the ark is finished, redemption’s work is completed! here I find rest to the sole of my foot.

LETTER LVII.

TO R. R. AND F. M. R.

W——r, February 9th, 1820.

THANK you for your unremitted and most peculiar forwardness ever to give me pleasure and to gratify me. May He, who stands ever ready to bless and give peace unto his people, restore a hundred fold into your bosoms! Dr. H.—'s letter is calculated to be a very profitable one; since, to my eyes at least, the Lord seems to have stamped upon it, in capital letters, "Cease ye from man." I may be wrong, but I do see in it an arrogancy and a weakness of argument, sweetly calculated to remind us, that the treasure by which, I trust, our God has at times enriched us, is placed in an earthen vessel, and that a weak, polluted one; that the excellency of the power, the wisdom, and the grace cometh from above; and that the man is still a man in himself, less than nothing, and vanity. If the Israel of God are to be separated from unbelievers in those *good things* in which unbelievers *will* outwardly unite with them; if the tares are to be pulled up *now*, how many precious roots of wheat will be plucked up with them. Our churches, our meetings, our public buildings for charitable purposes, all, all must be forsaken, fled from, by us; then must we needs go out of the world, and we must leave the unbeliever to boast, the world is *ours*. But as far as I can see, this is not the mind and will of our God. "I pray not that thou

shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou
 shouldest keep them from the evil." When I see him
 choosing a *Cyrus* to fulfil all his pleasure, yea, *loving*
 a *Cyrus* who did not know him, as an instrument in
 rebuilding a city, where he would delight to dwell ;
 when I see him employing even a *Judas* to cast out
 devils, and spread abroad the savour of his name ; I
 dare not pretend to be more nice than my all-perfect
 Lord ; I dare not cavil at nor reject any instrument of
 which he may see good to make use, however vile it
 may be. I dare not say *that* is too defiled for *my* hands
 to touch, which I plainly perceive him to be holding in
 his, nay, rather would I triumph in the wonder-working
 hand of my God, who thus turns the heart of stone as
 rivers of water, whithersoever he will, for the refresh-
 ment of his Zion ; and will glorify himself in the base
 and refuse things of the world, that no flesh should
 glory in his presence. Gladly would I place the ark of
 my God on the very beasts that perish ; gladly would
 I see it borne by " milch kine," could I perceive his
 over-ruling hand upon them, guiding them to his
 Israel. However defective as a body the Bible Society
 may be, yet when I watch its lovely progress, when
 I see it bearing the choicest treasures, turning neither
 to the right hand nor to the left ; when I hear the
 rejoicing of the people, as the treasure draws nigh them,
 and behold the incense of praise ascending to our God,
 as the treasures conveyed are unfolded to them ; when I
 follow the enriched Bethshemites into a heavenly inheri-
 tance, and hear them swell the grand chorus above ; when
 I behold this, and far, far more, with my whole heart

and soul I must love the Bible Society, and whoever meets me on that ground is, *on THAT* ground, a fellow labourer, a soul to whom in *this* undertaking I can from my heart say, "I wish you good luck in the name of the Lord." I would shun a Cerinthus in places of pleasure or amusement, but were I to see a Cerinthus endeavouring to save the life of a fellow-creature, and greatly needing assistance in his benevolent design, may God ever preserve me from that bigotry, that narrowness of heart, which would tempt me to fly from him. Strange also are his objections against collecting money, and to me they savour strongly of that temptation of Satan, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these *stones* be made bread." How missions are to be carried on with "*no money*," in the present day, I see not, nor do I care to see, when I hear my God condescending to make use of this means for the encouragement of his Zion, declaring that the silver and the gold are his, that the gain of the whole earth shall be consecrated to him; when I see him choosing the merchandize and the hire of the harlot Tyre, to be "*holiness* unto him, for them that dwell before him." (Isaiah xxiii. 18.) And though, when the Sun of righteousness had scarcely risen above the horizon, the rays of light were partial, and the seed was only to be sown where these rays rested to nourish and invigorate them; yet now, blessed be his power and grace, he is beginning to shine in full resplendence. I hear him say that his glorious beams shall cover the earth. Not a country, city or village is excluded; *all* the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Well may the

labourer go forth in hope and joy, for not one spot can he be in where his Lord will not come, where he has not *solemnly engaged* to follow. As to waiting to know to whom to go, I should call him an idle, backward servant, who stood loitering for further directions, after his master has said, "Preach the gospel to *every* creature."

LETTER LVIII.

To F. M. R.

W——r, *February*, 1820.

I KNOW you must be very busy, my beloved F——y, and therefore I will try not to expect to hear from you, and will give my naughty hankering heart a little flogging every day, as it sinks at the sight of an empty-handed postman. I have been thinking much of you in your new undertakings in the schools, and proudly and foolishly longing to bear some of your burdens for you, though I have him to apply to on your behalf, who can and will sustain you under every one, and who knows, to half a grain, what it is right, needful, and good for you to bear, and will not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom. Whilst I hear you complaining of weakness and inability, I feel as sure that you must hold on and hold out, as that there are strength and ability in the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity. When I see a dear little child attempting to carry a heavy weight, unconscious of its weakness,

unsolicitous of assistance, I tremble for it ; I feel hurt for the disappointment, should it not be able to move it ; I tremble for the safety of the child, should it have sufficient strength to lift it up, lest it should injure the little self-sufficient creature. But when I see a child sensible of its inability to bear a burden, calling upon a most indulgent, tender parent for help ; when I see that parent hastening its relief, bearing all the weight and inconvenience, and only suffering his beloved little one to *make a show*, I am satisfied, I am happy. In my F——y I see the latter dear child, and I forget to fear and suffer for her.

. . . . What a mercy is it that chance cannot find one crevice by which it may enter into our world. We purpose leaving this dear place about the 11th or 14th, having been here four months ! and truly they are months to be much remembered by me. Though my body has undergone more *actual* suffering than it has often been called to bear, my soul has enjoyed a more than proportionable peace and tranquillity. These are the characteristics of my late enjoyments ; few outward means of grace, little fellowship and communion with fellow travellers, few peculiarly lively frames and feelings ; but a quiet enjoyment of my treasure, a sweet living out of the world ; and truly I can witness that the Lord does cause his people to inherit *substance* : it will bear leaning upon, searching into. He has been to me just what my worn-out mind and body seemed to want, a *resting* and a *hiding-place* ; blessed be his name, I trust both are greatly invigorated ; but he does not keep a *show* regiment ; when he gives strength,

he will call upon us to endure hardness. I am expecting it; may I be kept leaning upon him, and the storm will sink into a calm.

Does R—— remember dear Mr. S——t on “In the year that King Uzziah *died*.” I have so thought of it. It seems so to magnify the privileges of the inhabitants of Zion. Behold their King liveth, and is alive for *evermore*! and how sweet is it at such times as these to remember, that he is in one sense, “King of *all* the earth,” reigning and ruling for *his* people; truly they may be glad thereof. The heart of our earthly king is in his hand, and he turneth it as shall be for his glory in the good of Zion. Blessed are the people that are in such a case!

LETTER LIX.

TO THE SAME.

F——e, February 21st, 1820.

.... BLESSED be that tender, loving hand, which hath drawn a veil over the next moment. I do rejoice to hear of all your mercies, and could desire to feel as you do, so earnest a longing to praise and love the Giver. What is this very longing, my beloved sister, but a heart made so deeply sensible of mercies, that no returns can satisfy its sense of what it owes. I should think little of the gratitude of that soul which would rest contented with what it feels for mercies received;

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that soul which, not aware of its own short-comings, is not ready to call upon every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord ; which finds all too little, too poor, to pay the immense debt, and eternity too short a span in which to declare it. Do not question the skill and knowledge of your good Physician, he knows well what cordials he may administer, and much as his heart delights in blessing, he will not allow you one comfort or mercy more than he sees will be safe. When the bitter draught is required, however unwilling, be assured he *will* administer it.

LETTER LX.

TO R. R. AND F. M. R.

March 7th, 1820.

My loved brother and sister ! hail ye that are highly favoured of the Lord, for of a truth the Lord is with you, and is most abundantly blessing you. How carefully does he watch over you, lest his mercies should become your snares and your miseries. My naughty heart is terribly torn, perhaps more for you, my beloved F——y, than for your sweet little girl, though I have been picturing to myself the bodily sufferings of the latter till my eyes are very weak. As for her most precious happy soul, I do assure you, without partiality or flattery, I have not the *shadow* of a doubt. It is robbing our glorious Conqueror of his spoils, if we take from him the babes of his own children. Should there

be an *elect* number of these, his very *faithfulness* must lead us to conclude those shall be found among them, for whom he has put it into the hearts of his people to make intercession. Yes, if your little Fanny Helen is to be taken at this time, I feel assured that there is a place in the spiritual temple, which she will fill now, better than she could at any future moment. If she is to live, surely it is that she may declare the works of the Lord. How sweet will it be to tell her of the many times when there was apparently but a step between her and death! and of her wonder-working Physician! This morning we assembled around a mercy seat, and you and yours formed the chief subject of our supplications. What a happy, what an alone happy spot is a *mercy seat* at such seasons! Nothing but a covenant of grace and love, a covenant well ordered in all things and sure, around it! I fear I too much long to be with you, but all this is rightly ordered. I leave you only to go to my God on your behalf.

LETTER LXI.


To R. R.

I AM not sorry if I ever *offended* you by my fears, since it has roused you once more to address me. . . . I cannot indeed say that I am afraid of your getting too high

in doctrine. No, I long to climb with you to the top of Mount Pisgah; I see some blessed pilgrims, who have advanced far, far beyond me, on whom the Sun of Righteousness is shining more powerfully, and who are, therefore, enabled to reflect more light and warmth on their fellow pilgrims, and who, (whilst too many seem to discern little beside the sons of Anak, lose sight of their all-conquering Captain, and are in their own sight but as a company of grasshoppers) keep their eye fixed on the Finisher of their faith; on him in whom, even now, they are more than conquerors, and boldly say, "we are *well* able to overcome." I long to stand where they stand, and to hear the Lord pass by, and proclaim his wondrous name; I long to comprehend with them the immeasurable love of Immanuel. I feel assured that those are they who give glory to God, who build up the walls of Zion. If with such you associate, I would say, "I wish you good luck in the name of the Lord;" I would pray that you may drink into their spirit, walk in their steps. What I dread for myself, for you, and all who are dear to me, is, that spirit of controversy, which seems at this day to run high in many of the inhabitants of Zion. When V—— spoke in a letter to you of the *laws of controversy*, it appeared to me to savour sadly of Egypt, and to have no part in a city, of which "the Lord is the lawgiver." I find in my own heart so frightful a tendency to a party spirit, such a wretched inclination to *despise* one of the little ones, such itching ears for "foolish questions, contentions, striving about the law, &c. &c. &c.,

which are unprofitable and vain,* that I do dread every thing for myself or others, which may tend to nourish these poisonous weeds, these roots of bitterness, and beguile our minds from the simplicity which is in Christ. It is, indeed, sweet and blessed to walk with those pilgrims who can make melody with us as we sing the songs of Zion; it is sweet to be enabled to bear with meekness and patience any discordant notes from other pilgrims, whilst the *substance* of things hoped for, brings to us that day, when the harmony of hearts and voices shall be as the sound of many waters, blending in one and the same precious song for ever and ever. The former blessedness I have indeed enjoyed with you and my beloved F——y; the latter, I hope and pray to enjoy daily more and more, in proportion as that love is shed abroad in my heart, “which suffereth long, and is kind; which *vaunteth* not itself, is not *puffed* up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own,” &c. &c. You would hardly believe how awfully I stand in need of this; how what I have considered as darkness or error in any one, on some favourite point, has given me a sort of license to let my love wax cold, to slight their opinion on every other subject, and to say in my heart, stand by, for I am wiser than thou. I have often thought, never were three heads more exactly in unison on earth than ours; but you must shut out your Helen when your hearts would make melody. Whilst you can truly say, worthy is the Lamb to receive *all* glory, and honour, and blessing; whilst you can sincerely say, “By the grace of

God I am what I am;" my heart would make some reserve for its own praise and glory, and say, by my own wisdom, diligence, &c. &c., I am *partly* what I am. But confessions made to *man* gratify a heart that would fain be thought humble; soon, very soon, heart and voice will indeed be in tune, and who then ought louder to sing than we? . . . I hope you do now believe that your poor sister is in want of *very*, very much; and that you do not forget me when you make petitions for the needy at a mercy seat; neither you nor yours are forgotten by your most grateful and attached Sister.



LETTERS

E. S. P. AND O. A. P.,

HER TWO YOUNGEST SISTERS, IN WHOSE EDUCATION
AND SPIRITUAL WELFARE SHE HAD TAKEN THE
DEEPEST INTEREST.

LETTER I.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

F—m, July 1st, 1817.

MOST gladly do I take the first opportunity of pouring out my long burthened heart to my two ever dearest sisters. It seems months since I spoke to you of those precious truths which I trust are far sweeter to us than honey or the honeycomb; but when my naughty rebellious heart would sometimes raise the heavy sigh, truly it is quickly succeeded by the voice of joy and thanksgiving, whilst our eternal hallelujahs seem to awake upon my ear, and I catch a glimpse of that brilliant temple in which we are to serve our God day and night, in which we shall ever sing and not be weary, in which the name of our Beloved will be echoed from tongue to tongue and from harp to harp; where we may stand undisturbed and look back on

the way by which we came, and tell each other of the great things the Lord hath done for us, while admiring angels shall crowd around to hear worms tell of a love and mercy to which they themselves are strangers. I pray God that we may be enabled to keep an eye more stedfastly fixed on our home; I am aware you will need it very much; my heart does feel for you, when I think of you looking around in vain on the right hand and the left for me. I felt it sadly too much when you left me; and where is our remedy? Has the good, the skilful Physician provided nothing for so painful a complaint? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Blessed, blessed be God, there is enough and to spare; yea, more, it has been tried by many labouring under the like disorder, and never been known to fail in its salutary effects. When Abraham was called upon to leave his country, his home, his friends, nature must have received many a deep and grievous wound; but this precious balm more than healed him, made him stronger than before he received the wound. What did he feel, think you, when called upon to give up his laughter, his dearest joy? Are you required to do this? Turn your eyes where he turned them in this trying hour; the cordial which suited his case will assuredly suit yours. Yes, look unto Him who will be better unto you than ten thousand sisters—look unto him who is invisible, but whom having not seen, you love; look unto that city which hath foundations; confess that here you are but strangers and pilgrims, that you dwell in tents which must soon be taken down. And though here

the curtains are drawn around, and you see not those whom your souls love, yet soon, very soon, shall the veil be rent in twain, the wall of separation broken down, and an abundant entrance administered unto us into one common home, to dwell together, not for a year, not for million millions of years, but for an unmeasured eternity. Here, then, may our gladdened eyes be fixed—here, I desire that *mine* should be fixed, even whilst poor weak nature is dimming my natural eyes with tears.

I expect that your path will be much more intricate and difficult; but thanks be to God, we are not our own guides. You shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it; when you turn to the *right* hand, or when you turn to the *left*; yea, more, the Lord shall go *before* you in the way, and the God of Israel shall be your *rereward*." He will not leave one of his fainting, halting, wounded soldiers behind; he tarries with the *rereward*, nor will he leave one, but bring the weakest and faintest home to glory. For look, when they are oppressed, he bids them lean on him, and leads them on gently; when they can move no further, he places them in his bosom, and encircles them with his everlasting arms. Oh, look unto him, lay every difficulty in prayer before him, make him your Counsellor, and you shall not greatly err.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Jan. 26th, 1818.

As my time for writing to you, my ever dearest sisters, is very limited, I must begin, though it be in all the bustle of the first evening at this place; but where shall I begin or where shall I end the tale of my precious Lord's loving-kindness and tender mercies? Goodness and mercy have gone before, have followed, have embraced me on every side. How happy a place will that temple be, where we shall excel in strength, only to praise the Lamb; where, instead of weariness we shall find increasing strength—instead of coldness, increasing warmth—instead of a burthening, deadening tabernacle, a spiritual body; yea, as surely as we have borne the image of the earthy, so surely shall we bear the image of the heavenly. How glorious, our second Adam! *altogether lovely*; and yet we know that we shall be like him! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, while we gaze on him face to face, we shall be transformed into his likeness—see him as he is. Well then may we “comfort one another with these words;” well may the hands that hang down be lifted up, to take hold on such blessedness; well may the feeble knees be confirmed as they journey towards such a country! But still the mournful thought will intrude, “And if it should

not be for me—if I should be deceiving myself—if I should be a hypocrite at last?” *Mournful* did I say? I might have said *blessed*; for these thoughts are to be met with in that path only which leads to blessedness; here they often swarm, but they infest not the broad road; the soul dead in trespasses and sins never felt their sting; the traveller Zionwards never escaped it. What then? are you to cherish them? Nay, but examine them well; look at the wound, look at the consequences, and you will often have reason to say, “An enemy hath done this;” it is my part to wrestle against it. There are some wholesome, salutary fears, those which make us watchful, prayerful, and often applicants to the good Physician; of such it may be said, “Blessed is the man that feareth always.” But those which enfeeble the soul, which dim the eye of faith, which clog, as it were, our chariot wheels, and make us to get on heavily in our pilgrimage—such as militate against that glorious command, “Rejoice in the Lord *alway*”—such are dishonourable to our Captain, our Redeemer, our Husband; such cause him to look on his children (if such a thing be possible) with *anger*, whilst he is grieved at the hardness of their hearts. Against such I charge you to pray and wrestle; and while your enemy, transformed into an angel of light, would make you bestow on them the glorious appellation of *humility*, see that the Searcher of hearts call them not pride, self-righteousness, self-seeking, and an ungrateful discontent with that precious robe of his own providing, yea, the one wherewith he himself is clothed.

He looks not for worthiness, but for willingness. If the Lord has made you "willing in the day of his power" to put on this robe, to be complete in this way, attempt not to alter this plan; "thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom." When he has said that he will be well pleased, shall we imagine that he will be dissatisfied? When he has said he will rejoice over us, shall we think he will find fault with us? "Hath he said, and will he not do it?" Therefore, "again I say, Rejoice." Do the waves and billows rise high? are your hearts nearly overwhelmed within you? Your Rock is higher than they. Is your righteousness ragged and filthy? Ye are complete in Christ. Are you weak? The strength of Omnipotence is yours. Are you ignorant? Christ is your wisdom. Are you in bondage? He leads captivity captive. Yea, why speak I of one or two of the precious gifts which he hath purchased for men, even for the rebellious? "ALL things are yours." Christ your Husband hath nothing in himself, in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, but it is yours by a covenant which cannot be broken. Things *present*, those which assume at times a gloomy aspect, even these are yours in the most glorious sense, yours in that covenant whose bond is love.

May the choicest blessings attend you, my beloved sisters. Fear not. God is with you. Love one another with pure hearts fervently; and may the God of love knit you closer and closer to himself and to all his members.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

March 23rd, 1818.

I DID very much wish and hope to be able to answer my beloved sisters, but as no letter has yet greeted my too wishful eyes, and I know not how soon you leave F——, I must write, lest you should not receive this in time, which I flatter myself would be a great disappointment. Oh, that we prized the letter from our blessed Emmanuel as we do the few faulty lines of erring creatures; how is every word of the latter examined, thought of, talked of, dwelt upon; how is every expression of affection sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; how eagerly do we desire to gratify every little wish expressed therein; how do we admire every sentiment, which, if it is good, is only so far good as it is borrowed from the other slighted Epistle. What corruption of the affections, what blindness of the understanding, what unspeakable ingratitude and baseuess does this demonstrate! Where can we find such strains of tenderness, where such deeply interesting intelligence, where such glad tidings, where such bright and sparkling jewels, as in that precious letter from the King of kings which often lies for hours neglected, or is taken up in form without any lively interest as to its contents; whose glorious intelligence so seldom or so coldly becomes the subject of conversation, whose multiplied expressions of tenderness meet with so small

a return, whose wishes are so little complied with? I know not how it is with you: I have been speaking of my own vilest self, and it is my happiness to hope and believe that my beloved Lord has not *two* Helens to bear with. I would not think there were *two* among his ransomed people who grieve him, slight him, and make him such returns as I do. Faithfulness is truly the girdle of his reins, a girdle which can never be burst asunder, or the mountains of mine iniquities would have burst it long since. He is truly a God that changeth not, *therefore* I am not, I *cannot* be consumed; having loved his own, he loved them even to the end. Yea, there must come a time when the Lord shall hate his own beloved Son ere he can hate me: for it is the love wherewith he hath loved him that he hath bestowed upon me, a love which floods of iniquity cannot quench; which long nights of darkness, thick with dews of neglect, cannot damp; higher than the highest mountains of my corruptions; deeper than the lowest depths of my hidden iniquities; longer than the utmost length of straying paths and vile departures; broader than the tremendous breadths of my wide-gaping wounds; a mantle which can more than conceal every deformity, yea, in which I shall be the admiration of God, of angels, of an assembled world. Blessed and praised for ever be that love which spread the wondrous skirt over me, when none eye pitied me, when I was most loathsome, and which my compassionate Redeemer, still delights to wrap around me, though I am filthy and abominable, even to the loathing of myself! What return shall I make unto the Lord? Oh my

God, I can but give thee of thine own; work in me to will and to do. Enable me to weave a little garment of love and cast it in the way for thee to ride over, as thou goest forth conquering and to conquer. Plant and water my garden, that I may have some flowers to strew in thy way. Indeed, indeed, I am too often an empty vine, too often bringing forth fruit unto myself; but thou canst make the desert a garden of the Lord; thou canst cause the myrtle to spring up instead of the brier. Come, then, thou great Dresser of the vineyard, and behold and visit thy vine. Come, thou south wind, and blow upon my garden; then let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

How have I been running on about self; daily do I lament this error in my letters, and daily repeat it. Oh my injured, my slighted Lord, enable me to speak of thy righteousness; enable me to set forth thy beauties; enable me to silence self, and be thou alone exalted in all I say or do. How precious, how very precious should this season make our true paschal Lamb! how should it endear that Friend who would give no sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids; who would not have where to lay his head, until being numbered with the transgressors, he lay in the grave, that he might become the death of death, smoothe and sweeten that resting-place for his beloved people, and purchase for them an eternal Sabbath; where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. How unsearchable that love which would sheathe the sword of justice in agonies which it hath not entered into the heart of man

to conceive; agonies which wrung from the King of kings, the mighty God, those drops of blood which alone can secure us when the avenger of blood passes through this Egypt. One little drop of that shall indeed speak better things for us, shall turn the Avenger into the Protector, the angry God into the reconciled father. Thanks, thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift!

How have I thought of my beloved little flock as having no earthly shepherd, while I have been feasting in green pastures, but truly I count the greatest mercy of these mercies, not *resting* in them; feeling, as blessed be God I do, more weaned from the streams, more out of love with every thing in this world. I am very happy, but I trust I can say *my God* is my exceeding joy. I bear you often on my heart before the Lord, and I trust you do the same for me. May showers of blessing descend on you, and all around you!

LETTER IV.

To E. S. P.

April 13th, 1818.

So your poor bark had nearly reached the long-desired haven, but the good Pilot has seen a needa-be for putting to sea once more. When near our port, or when the sweet abode of rest appears at a great distance, yea, can scarcely be discerned—when illumi-

nated by the Sun of Righteousness, its golden walls and sparkling turrets cheer the eye of the tempest-tossed mariner, and he sees engraved in characters of unchanging love, here is **THY** mansion, this shall be **THY** rest for ever; or when clouds and darkness cover it, and he is not only tempted to ask whether he has a place in the celestial city, but whether there is a celestial city; when in deep distress he rushes through a Scylla and Charybdis, or rides on the smooth but more dangerous calm of waters; oh be it ours to keep this flag still flying, still in sight, "Jesus doeth all things well."

I feel sure, my beloved sister, you will have reason to testify this in the Lord's late dealings towards you. I know nothing calculated to make Jesus more precious to a believer's soul, to beat down self-confidence, and to strip off any filthy rags which are clinging to us as a *covering*, than realizing an approach into the *immediate* presence of God, the taking our stand at his bar; gifts, graces, frames, feelings, all shrink back in dismay when the important question is put, "Who shall justify?" Mountains of sin, legions of devils disappear as the morning cloud, when the Sun of Righteousness breaks forth and demands exultingly, "who shall lay any thing to your charge?" You, thanks to God, found Jesus thus precious to you, yea, found his price rubies, and that all the things you could desire were not to be compared with him. I can now only pray that you may remember him in health what you found him in sickness; that that Friend who has so eminently

displayed himself as born for adversity, may be your choicest, your dearest friend in all times of wealth and prosperity; that he who has so tenderly nursed you, and made all your bed in your sickness, he on whose bosom you have leaned, around whom you have clung in the hour of pain and peril, may still be your chosen resting place, your only ark when the floods are abated, and the water dried from off the face of the earth. Oh when, when will our hearts be weaned from broken cisterns? How many furnaces shall we oblige our blessed Refiner to prepare for us ere this dross of earthly affections be purged from our souls? Ah, why* speak I thus? Behold the leprosy has spread throughout the walls of our tabernacle, every stone must be taken down and laid in the dust, ere it can be removed; and then, oh how blessed, how glorious, how entire a removal of every thing that can offend, all, all shall sink as lead in the mighty waters. Then shall we be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven above, spiritual, pure, undefiled, everlasting, yea, what is sweeter than all, like unto Christ's most glorious body. "We know that we shall be like him." Blessed assurance! my soul, what wouldst thou more? surely thou mayest be content to tarry yet the twinkling of an eye, then shalt thou wake up in thy Creator's likeness, then shalt thou be fully satisfied. In your patience possess your soul. Mr. B—— says, if he could imagine a blank in heaven, it would be not having it in our power to be instrumental in bringing souls to our adored Jesus. Oh then let us be content

to live for that which even a heavenly life cannot afford. Here only can we be honoured with painful labours for our Beloved, hereafter we shall have but the pleasanter part of the work to perform, to rejoice over the prodigal. And remember for your comfort and encouragement the warfare is accomplished, the victory is gained, the Head triumphs, and he whose word is a command that cannot be broken, has willed that where he is, there shall we be also. I charge you not to give way to idle, hurtful fears, but rather be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, July 9th, 1818.

I CANNOT think what made my E——y fancy that my naughty will is so subdued. How different is the copy which I give of my heart on paper, to the original, as seen by my God; and yet, indeed, I hope I did not *mean* to give so unfaithful a representation. Indeed there *are* times when the gales of self-will blow so strongly, when I struggle so hard to get the rudder out of my blessed Pilot's hand, that, measuring his thoughts and ways by my own, I am almost led to conclude, he cannot be a *just* God, if he leave me not to myself, and break not my stubborn will by suffering me to split upon some dangerous rock. But no, he cannot, he will not. The covenant of peace cannot be

removed. Happily for me, it is made between the immutable Father and the immutable Son, and though I have justly forfeited his favour and protection millions of times, yet in my beloved surety I am safe, I am blessed. "His loving kindness will he not utterly take from *him*, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. Once has he sworn by his *holiness*, and he will not lie unto *David*." I desire much for myself, and for you, my beloved sister, and for all my brethren and sisters in the Lord, that we may see more of this blessed, this eternal covenant. It is the fountain-head of comfort, peace, and joy; it would animate our faith, our love, our zeal; it is promised as the privilege of those who fear the Lord; his secret shall be with them, and he will show *them his covenant*. Plead this promise, and he who is faithful will reveal unto you as much as shall be for his glory. Not all our vileness, not all our corruptions can mar this secret engagement between the Father and the Son, it is ordered in all things and sure; it is firmer than mountains and hills, it is in colours like unto an emerald, ever green, ever flourishing, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Many parts of scripture will be much opened to you while you keep an eye on this. It is a fountain, which, unbelief, carelessness, and ignorance have long kept sealed from me. I have but now and then caught a drop from others as they were carrying away some of its refreshing waters. I now seem to know little more than that there is such a fountain, and am brought daily to sit down in wonder and admiration at the foot of it; and to pray, Lord, Lord, open unto me

also. The theory of it may be learned from man, but the comfort, the life, the power of it is locked up in that treasury which no one can open but the Son of David, who carries the keys of all his treasures on his shoulders, "who openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

But how I have wandered from the subject on which I set out! I meant to undeceive you about your notions as to the state of my soul; but I can scarcely glance at a wound, ere my whole attention is taken up with admiration of my good and skilful Physician, and with that wondrous plan, which can bring a brand so ripe for burning to flourish in the courts of the Lord for ever. If we would see sin to be exceeding sinful, we must look at it as *pardoned*, we must believe that it is *our Lord, our husband*, against whom we have sinned. I never hate sin so much as when I hear my precious Lord saying, "*I have blotted it out.*" I never feel so ashamed of my uncleanness as when Jesus says, "*thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.*" Do not, I entreat of you, give way to a doubting frame of mind; it is not sufficiently wrestled against, it is not sufficiently hated by the children of God as that which so grieves and dishonours their blessed Master. It will wear the cloak of humility, it will speak so plausibly, that it oftener meets with approbation than with that reprehension which is its due. It may promote a legal bondage, but no filial obedience. It may keep alive that fear with which devils tremble, but none of that holy awe with which cherubim and seraphim veil their faces and worship around the throne. Would you

work out your salvation with fear and trembling, do it with the assurance that "it is God which worketh, and will work in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

I am thankful to hear that you are enabled to rejoice in our beloved C——'s joy, and to feel that Jesus hath done all things well. I can fully sympathize in your feelings on your return to F——; my naughty heart often shrinks back merely in the anticipation of it, but all these feelings are *weights* unbecoming those who are running a race, and a race too for such a prize. I charge my own heart, and I charge you, to endeavour to shake them off and lay them aside, and to be careful of amassing fresh ones. I charge you, my precious children, to be jealous over your hearts with respect to me; indeed, indeed, there is little of Christ in me, and that only you ought to love, that only you may love with safety. . . . I am much better in health; only pray for me that renewed strength may be but renewed activity in my great Restorer's service, that I may glorify him whether it be by life or by death, &c. &c.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, July 31st, 1818.

DEEPLY as nature will ever feel every pain and sorrow of my beloved child, yet truly the spirit does not

mourn, would not have it otherwise. No, my dearest E——y, not even the spiritual malady of which you complain, that very torpor of soul with which a short time since I was overwhelmed, when if I had energy to form a wish, I could almost have wished I had never been, and could not imagine but that the employments of heaven must be a wearisome exertion, that state which I could with so much difficulty see written among the all things that must work for my good, I am bound in gratitude to say I have experienced most fully and richly to be bound up in that blessed covenant. I do feel a more utter aversion and loathing of myself; oh, may I add a more simple leaning on my Beloved, a more eager pressing forward out of the wilderness, a more lively looking out and hasting unto that happy, happy country, where there shall in no wise enter *any thing* that defileth; no shadow of a cloud of sin, bringing coldness and darkness on the soul; no possibility of ever again grieving my precious, long-suffering Lord. Oh, when I think what he has been to me! when I hated my own company, and yet he would not leave me for one moment; when I cared not to speak to him, that he should have brought me out of this horrible pit, this mire and clay which weighed down my soul; and once more have put a song of thanksgiving in my mouth—Oh, who is a God like unto our God! a friend like unto our friend? I do truly think, could the most partial of my earthly friends know what passes through my heart in the course of one day, I might say, hour, they could not but *abhor* me. And yet it is my joy and comfort to know that

my good Physician is acquainted with every loathsome wound, every putrifying sore. When none eye could pity me, none heart love me, the holy Jesus will spread the skirt of love over me : when I am black in my own sight, he speaks not of one blemish, but tells me I am without spot. I never can find any thing but love and pity in his heart, and that makes me appear trebly vile. Sometimes, though assured of his love, I grow impatient, and am ready to say, " Lord, is my wound incurable ? why is it not healed ? could I not glorify thee more if thou wouldest rid me of this disease ?" then he assures me, what I understand not now, I shall know hereafter ; he tells me, if I had not this wound kept open, others more dangerous would break out. He promises support under it, and tells me that in this way his power will be most displayed, his glory most manifested.

Come then, my children, " hearken unto me, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul." I would encourage you to trust him, for indeed, indeed, he doeth all things well. I shall soon be telling angels what he has done for me. Oh, what a heaven it will be to hear them praise him for it ! Do let us try and practise our eternal song on earth—take down your harps. Can you say you are out of hell ? then praise the Lord. Can you say you are still in the country where an invitation to heaven is sent ? then praise the Lord. Can you say you have a desire to accept that invitation ? then praise him with the best member that you have ; for assuredly you shall praise him for ever. A dead soul cannot sincerely desire ;

then yours must already be passed from death unto life. You shall never come into condemnation; a throne, a crown, a heaven is yours. Now then look into this little list, and see if you cannot find one subject for a song, even a song of thanksgiving unto your God; and oh, may many hear it, and rejoice, and be more encouraged to put their trust in the Lord! Let the blessed children of Zion sing as they journey on their way, and endeavour to allure wretched, broad road travellers, into our ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Who would think, to see most of God's children, that Jesus had bequeathed his own peace to them, and prayed that their joy may be *full*! What is it that cuts off these streams of peace and joy from our soul? with some, perhaps it is in part the dimness of the eye of faith: for myself, I must say my iniquities are they which separate between me and my peace; and I think I quite agree with our dear old minister,* "we shall be happy in proportion as we are holy." This will be our heaven to see Jesus as he is, and to be *like him*; and surely it is our heaven begun here to gain more and more of his likeness; it is this the renewed soul groans and pants after, it is the increase of this which gives increase of joy; it is the waking up in his perfect likeness which will give full satisfaction to the soul, and joy for evermore. I am aware, however, that this holy, happy walk cannot, will not, be constantly maintained, nay, I know that for wise and mysterious reasons, Canaanites are left in our hearts; but even these enemies

* The Rev. Thomas Jones.

shall be made to minister unto us, and nourish the very graces they would fain destroy; these drive the af-frighted soul to seek for help at a throne of grace; these fiery flying serpents make him out of love with the waste howling wilderness; these infesters of his path bruise his heel only to hasten his loitering steps, and make him press on more eagerly to that land where they can never gain admittance. Oh, what a time will that be when we go in with him to the marriage supper, and hear *the door shut*, every enemy shut out for ever, and ourselves safely enclosed within the everlasting gates!

My heart has been talking to God and man of your party lying down and rising up, sitting in the house and walking by the way. I trust it may be a soul-strengthening time to you all. You may guess I have rather longed to be with you, but though tossed about at first, my heart has now through grace returned unto its only rest, and is enjoying a peace which passeth all understanding. It is, however, a joy that I am much inclined to sift and suspect, for I am particularly well in bodily health, and I fear lest a good deal should be animal spirits, which you know run high when I am tolerably well.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

August 12th, 1818.

. . . . On looking back to your letter, I find there is a question still unanswered, a question which I could spend eternity in answering, and ever find something new to say, something more of my own exceeding vileness, and the abundant riches of grace in Christ Jesus. You ask me when, and how, I was converted. For a brief and very imperfect sketch of this blessed time and event, I must refer you to my journal, in which, I believe, I was tolerably faithful to what was going on in my heart—a heart more resolutely bent on the pursuit of rest and enjoyment on earth, I can scarcely imagine—I say *pursuit*, for I certainly never overtook them. *My* God was then the applause and love of fellow-worms, and oh! what costly sacrifices did I make to it! For this I studied, I read, I meditated: but how can I describe to you the vanity, the emptiness of my labours! How can I tell you the vexation of spirit they cost me! When I seemed nearly to have reached the pinnacle of my desires, and, in anticipation, heard myself spoken of as a remarkably clever and peculiarly sensible girl, I beheld another before me; I heard of another that far outwent me; chilling envy blasted my hopes; I again sunk back, but again began to toil up the hill. Truly I *had* a hard task-master. At this time mind and body were preying on each other. I was

morose, sullen, wretched. A superior excellency in any one was a sufficient ground for jealousy, and you will scarcely believe how strongly I felt it towards my own sisters.

But though possessed with this frightful legion, though anxiously desiring to dwell among the tombs, I must acknowledge that I often endeavoured to bind them with cords and chains of my own manufacturing ; but this only served to discover more of their strength and malignity in breaking the chains asunder and casting the cords away. The season of Lent was, I think, almost as long as I can remember, a time when I was very much engaged in this employment. I cannot now, without shuddering, think of the solemn vows with which again and again I bound myself to the Lord, and called upon him to record that in heaven which I was about to trample under foot on earth. The walls of your present apartment were witnesses to these awful transactions ; and had the stone cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answered it, to proclaim my shame and pronounce my condemnation, thou, O my injured Lord, mightest have been justified when they spoke, and clear, when they thus judged. I do not believe I then ever thought myself *deserving* of everlasting burnings ; but I could not but feel my total unpreparedness for heaven ; nay, such was the enmity of my heart against God, that could I have made out a title to heaven, I believe I should have chosen a title to hell. There was nothing gloomy, nothing tedious, nothing wearisome, which I did not attach to my ideas of heaven : and well do I remember, when a dear,

partial friend, to comfort me in a time of sickness, (when I was always very low-spirited,) said, "You have nothing to make yourself unhappy about, you will go to a better world if you leave this," the bitter tears which this assurance cost me, the *loathing* with which my unholy soul contemplated a *better* world. And now, you may well imagine, I had a horror of dying, feeling, as I did, that to whichever world I went, I *must* be wretched. How fearful was I of falling asleep lest death should come upon me, foolishly thinking I could keep it off by waking and watching. A birth-day which I spent at N——n, I think in 1813, seemed to thicken my gloomy cloud. H——y read a sermon (of Paley's, I think,) on the love of God. However dark the poor author might be on the subject, he convinced me of one thing, that *I* had *no* love to God. I could almost wish to see the room again where I slept, and to sit down once more in the well-remembered spot, where, with streaming eyes and a bursting heart, I wrote in my journal, as the last hour of my birth-day struck, "I see nothing but everlasting burnings before me, and I CANNOT turn out of the way." I was brought to this conclusion, not so much from a conviction of sin, as from the assurance I felt that one who so hated God *must* be wretched, and that there was no heaven made for such. O how did I wish that I had never been born! What would I not have given to have been annihilated! I should be ungrateful did I not here confess that my beloved D——'s letters often drew a veil over promised pleasures, and tended to nourish my salutary uneasiness, though they did not

exactly point out a remedy for me. I now went about yet further, and worked still harder, to make myself meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. No old monk, perhaps, ever practised much greater austerities than I did, continually thwarting my bodily appetites to the satisfaction of the more frightful and hungry spiritual ones of pride and vain glory.

At this time hearing that one was expected at F——, who had long flattered my vanity, and taken possession of my carnal heart, I had now new prospects, new schemes, new desires. I may truly say, at this period, I was greedy of destruction. I tremble when I see myself hanging by a single cord, as it were, over unfathomable ruin. I would be thankful, I would love much, when I remember that that was a cord of everlasting love, held by the hand which I nailed to the tree. The time arrived, the time when I would fain have put the Lord far from me: when I tried to escape every thought of him myself, but tried only to discover that I was linked by a chain that I could not break. It were vain to attempt to relate to you all that passed between me and my God during this month: I love to talk to him about it, to go to him with that sweet plea for intimacy and love, “*Thou hast known my soul in adversities: when my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.*” I am really overwhelmed, when I review the tenderness, the love, and the pity with which he bore with me. I may well say, “His entleness hath made me great.” I laboured in the very fires to please the creature, and to be pleased and satisfied by it. Even then, I *would* have set up a

throne for him in my heart, and trampled upon my God. *Could any* thing but God have satisfied me, and given me rest and peace, gladly would I have taken it. I had just sufficient sight in my soul, to discover that there was *something* wanting in one, whom I strove to think perfection—*what* it was I could not say—and this was my strange answer to him. Oh days to be much remembered, struggling to follow my Moses out of Egypt, yet struggling likewise to keep peace with my Pharaoh, even on the hard conditions of making brick without straw. One hour, fancying music in my chains, apparently happy and contented in my old master's service; the next hour, prostrate in my room in an agony of tears, wearied with his service; and longing for, yet afraid to try, another master. Ah, my precious Lord, thou only canst know how I now served thee, how often my heart would have thrust thee away, and said, "I will not have this man to reign over me!" At length I was *carried* through such a line of conduct as broke the bands I would have strengthened I truly was not myself during the last breakfast. While man thought I felt nothing, my God is witness, what a bleeding heart I endeavoured to surrender to him. And oh, that I may witness before men and angels, how tenderly he healed the wounds, how gently he probed, when necessary, how gladly he poured in the oil and wine, how he rejoiced over a heart so vile, that I could not bear to keep it for myself, and only gave it to him because I was tired of it! Truly, my Jesus, it was thou who didst spread thy skirt over me, when I was yet lying in my blood. Thou madest me

comely through thy comeliness, and fragrant through the sweet odour of thine atonement.

With the very, very little knowledge I then had of myself, you will not be surprised to hear that I fancied my Dagon was utterly demolished, and God the sole possessor of my heart. . . . About a month afterwards an event took place, which showed me that Dagon was only a little broken, and still erected opposite to the ark. The 28th of February, 1814, Jehovah made bare his holy arm, and did indeed overthrow him; how great was the fall thereof! My prison doors were burst, my chains broken. "My son, give *me* thine heart," was a command as cheering and delightful to me, as it before had been melancholy and irksome. Had I possessed millions of hearts, I should have thought them too few to give to my beloved Lord. Though my treatment of him had been so peculiarly base, I felt nothing like fear, restraint, or reserve; his company was all I desired; my only sad moments were those when I was forced away from him; I leaned on his bosom, and entered into rest. It was my day of espousals, and never did a bride so rejoice in her bridegroom, as my soul rejoiced in her Beloved. And now methinks, as to what followed, I would defer speaking much of it, till I get within the new Jerusalem, and hear the gates for ever closed against pride, vain-glory, and self-applause; till I could feel sure that the speaker and the hearer would ascribe all praise unto him to whom alone it is due. I was indeed very zealous; but how much self-seeking, how much animal feeling, how much idea there was of making myself

more deserving of my Saviour by my works, he alone knows. From that time to the present hour, I know not that I have had a question of my safety for more than ten minutes at a time. Though I have had some gloomy, wintry days, and though my manners in the wilderness, since the day that I knew my precious Lord, have been abominable, I should hope beyond what he suffers from any other, yet goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I am enabled to sing on my road, however rough, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

My paper is nearly full, and yet I seem to have told you nothing: nothing as I ought to have told you of boundless love, and boundless sin; but indeed, I never retraced my steps on paper before, and have seldom related them to any one. If they lead you, my beloved sister, to praise and trust my very gracious God, I shall rejoice in having sent them, and complied with your wish, instead of choosing a subject, which, I should have guessed, would have been more profitable. Only let me caution you not to be cast down by any thing I have said, as though no change had taken place in you. There are thousands now around the throne, who cannot say exactly *how* or *when* they were converted. He has led many blind by a way which they knew not; and they scarcely opened their eyes, or dared to think they were in the way to the celestial city, till they beheld the Lamb face to face, without one cloud between. Do you think you could love him if you got there? Do you think you could like to hear him praised? Then, be assured, though it was at a time,

and in a manner you knew not, he that is mighty to save hath taken away that heart which is enmity against himself, or rather, hath implanted another heart, which shall be more than conqueror over the carnal mind.

LETTER VIII.

TO O. A. P.

S——m, August 9th, 1819.

. I WAS happy to see your handwriting once more, and especially as it conveyed such happy tidings. There is a feeling, I cannot exactly say its source, but it is something like shame and fear, which we are apt to feel when we would speak of the more gracious dealings of the Lord towards us. While we are not ashamed of dishonouring and grieving our God from day to day with large and doleful accounts of what is left *undone*, how backward are we to speak of what he has done, is doing, will do. Oh Satan, Satan, how dost thou dread, how dost thou hate to hear us practise a song which we shall sing through eternity! whilst our God esteems himself honoured by those who offer him praise. Oh may we then praise him while we live, be busied in telling of what he has done, and assuredly he will never leave us without some subject for our song. I know not what to say about F—— and Broadstairs, except that it *is* all settled to a moment, and that as shall be most for our good and the glory of our God. I have begged

A — to tell you something of the Lord's gracious dealings with me, and fain would I call upon every thing that hath breath to praise him, though my own heart, alas, remains too silent, and my poor life speaks little to his praise. Mr. S—— inquired particularly after and prayed much for you. I could have liked that you should have heard him speak of the happiness of believers, as consisting so much in what he called *meeting* the Lord in his providences, desiring that he should "work in us that which is *well pleasing in his sight*," *surrendering* ourselves to him, for him to accomplish all the good pleasure of his will in us and by us, not *struggling* against his way and will; believing that he is doing just right with us. Oh, cultivate this, a *confidence* in your covenant-keeping God. Had you seen Mr. S——, you would indeed have witnessed that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness. All that this poor world could offer would appear truly a painted bubble. We seemed to be at the gate of heaven as we listened to him pouring forth the praises of his God and Saviour, and bearing testimony to his goodness.

My time is gone; I would say to you, pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks, rejoice evermore, grieve not the Spirit. Be stedfast, unmoveable; the coming of your Lord draweth nigh. The Lord make you grow in grace and in the knowledge of him!

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

January, 1820.

I MUST not give you room to be jealous, and indeed too gladly would I fill sheets to you had I time to do so. I have been feeding in very green pastures, and should we meet, I hope I shall be enabled to remember much to tell you. . . . I hope I have been led to pray much for you all at the opening of this year, the first we have entered upon absent in body, but oh! how sweetly united! what cause for praise that we are brought into the same path, have the same guide, and the same home in view! and such a little speck lying between! Nay, in the purpose of our God we are already at home. "*Come* unto Mount Zion!" Yet every step of the way should be precious while there is aught to do for him, a jewel to pick up for his crown, a member of his precious body to which we may minister. May he honour you with full employment by the way, and give you an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom! . . . I have had much conversation with —; he is very devoted, but has much to learn in the school of Christ; a *babe* in *conflict*, and therefore unable to support those that are under it; afraid of giving the children their own bread, lest dogs should catch at it. You may imagine we had both much to say—may he be led to trust God more with his own plan of saving souls! . . . May the choicest blessings rest upon you.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

1820.

PRECIOUS Sister, how very, very little did we think, when we parted in my little room at W——, how widely and how long our paths were to be separated; but how unspeakably sweet is it to know that they meet at the *end*, if not before. I more than ever see the tender mercy of my God in bringing you so early into the narrow way. What would it have been in these long separations from those whom I love as my own soul, had you been wandering on the dark mountains, had there been a shadow of room for the question, “shall I meet them when I reach my home?” Oh that our only desire may be to mark every step of the way with our cheerful services, as our God has marked them with showers of blessings! I pray that you may enjoy much of your God during this season. They that seek *shall* find; and the more you are with him, the more will you desire to be with him, the more you dig into your treasure, the richer you *shall* find it. The LORD is the portion of your soul. May you enjoy your portion! the very words contain untold, unknown treasures. Take diligent heed unto your soul, keep it with ALL diligence, your enemies are *most* diligent. Especially I would entreat you to *begin* the day with God. Rise early. Your God waits to hear your voice betimes in the morning; be you ready also to hear his. I would recommend the solitary

walk ; it is there that I enjoy most of my God, but you may differ in this respect. I should tremble for that day in which you had not had a realizing view of God in Christ ere you entered upon it. May you be enabled to adorn the doctrine of your precious Saviour in all things. May all take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and see the beauty of the Lord your God upon you. There are many burdens to bear for one another, many infirmities with which to forbear, many failings which require a large mantle of love for their concealment, many errors which call upon us to look for our own unobserved faults.

I may stay no longer writing to you. Kindest regards to all dear old village friends.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

W——r, Jan. 28th, 1820.

BELIEVE me, were I only to consult my own fond heart, I should give up many a morning to you ; but then I should not feel happy after it. I should condemn myself in the thing which I allowed, and feel that I had been robbing God. Not but what I always hope and pray that he will teach me how to speak a word in season to your precious souls ; but if I may speak to you and many more dear children at the same time, and if I may feed many



of his dear lambs together with those so peculiarly dear to me, would you not have it so? and whilst he draws me each morning to the posts of his gates inquiring what he would have me to do, praying that I may spend and be spent for him; whilst he condescends to stand by me in my little work to assist and encourage, I seem to act a deceitful and ungrateful, treacherous part, when I decline the work assigned me: I look upon it as a special mercy and answer to prayer, his having led me to see that is my allotted task. Much have I been buffeted, and much have I suffered on this head, but he has graciously measured the time of trial, and has come to my relief *right early*. Should he never benefit one precious soul by it, I have abundant cause to bless him for the food and refreshment he conveys to my soul while meditating on the portion on which I am about to write, or I should say, for the unsought, unlooked-for sweetness which flows into my soul whilst copying, and paying rather more than a common attention to his blessed word.*

I was writing this morning on Gen. xlv., and had a refreshing view by faith of the grand revelation of the true Joseph to his brethren, his sweet anxiety that they should remember their sins no more, his rest and rejoicing in his love towards them, his will that they should dwell with him, and know poverty no more; the joyful acclamations amidst the innumerable company of angels, when the brethren of the Lord are come, when he sees of the travail of his soul and is

* Alluding to "Scripture Stories," which she was then writing.

satisfied. Oh, there is so very, very much in it. But you will probably see my poor thoughts upon it, either in manuscript, or in print.

In my reading to-day, I was much struck (though not for the first time) with the account of the milch kine which were to carry back the ark to Israel. I could rejoice and I could weep over these animals. I could blush at my non-resemblance, and pray to be made like unto them. The necks, on which never yoke had come, submit to be tied to the cart which bears the ark of the God of Israel, the loved young ones are shut up from them; and willingly do they turn their backs on them, and leave them that they may serve the God of Jacob. Keenly as nature felt, and loudly as she uttered her moans, they hearken not unto her; onward they go, taking the straight way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. At length, having arrived where an acceptable offering can be made to the Lord, they stop, their work is done, and they are presented as a burnt offering to the God of Israel. Here may the most devoted Christian gaze and blush; here may the least devoted look and take courage. The hand which yoked the will of the milch kine, which overpowered the cries of nature, which led them straight forward, and brought them to stand as willing victims when their work was accomplished, *that* hand is not shortened. May we feel its blessed power and take courage. On the other hand, however devoted, we cannot excel these milch kine, and must acknowledge, that to the hand which wrought thus powerfully upon them, we owe all we are, and

have, and do, that is good or profitable, and that boasting must be excluded, when we see the mighty Potter working thus powerfully on the clay even of animals.

.... How foolishly desirous is *nature* that *every* cross should be removed from the path of my own loved ones, though the spirit is well assured that it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Yes, blessed be God, I do feel *quite* assured you have not one useless trial, one unprofitable difficulty; and though where you now are staying, *man* may be the instrument of putting many in your way, for which *he* can assign no good reason, the finger of God is in it, and has laid a blessing under every cross; a blessing which you could not get at but by taking up that very cross. Endeavour to cultivate an assurance that he is leading you by the *right* way; that it ~~is~~ the way to Zion; and I think, however rough, you will be able to say, "cheerful is *EVERY* path which leads to *HOME*."

I have been delighting lately in Isaiah—the wonderful, glorious arguments entered into by Jehovah and his elect servant, for the saving of sinners, and the glorifying of the blessed Trinity in their salvation. How striking are ch: xlix. and l. on the subject! how humbling, yet how encouraging, ch: li.! How beautifully descriptive of the helplessness of man and the power of God! What does the stone do for itself when hewn out of the quarry? If we may speak of it as having any power, that power is to *resist*, to cling to its natural situation. And when he has taken the trouble to hew us out, will he leave us? Does he ever

spend his strength in vain and for nought? And when he has delivered us from *such* a state, can we ever be in a situation in which he *cannot* deliver us? May it encourage us to put him in remembrance, to call upon him to *awake* and stir up his love.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, April 8th, 1820.

I MUST begin a letter, though I feel but little equal to writing. My heart has toiled along the road to —, and feels lost and overwhelmed in stupid amazement. . . . Then I turn within, and mourn over this evil heart of unbelief, which does so basely limit him who hath hitherto wrought such wonders for us. I breathe out my desires to my God, and sometimes I catch the distant sound, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Yet, blessed be God, in the midst of this rough and stormy sea, one precious anchor of my soul is kept fixed—"Jesus doeth all things well;" I can trust him as doing what is right, though I cannot trust him for answering the desires of my heart. I am assured that very shortly I shall be able to shout aloud, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints;" though now they may be very contrary from the ways which my heart would mark out.

The government is on Emmanuel's shoulders ; be this enough for us to know ; yea, let us be glad and rejoice, whilst we behold all things in heaven and in earth given into the hands of One who was dead for our sins, who is risen for our justification. What good thing can be withhold, who withheld not his precious life from us, who shares his throne, his crown, his kingdom, all he is and all he has, with us ? Ah ! how sad is it that we should grieve *such* a friend by our little faith, that we should dishonour one so faithful, so true, by questioning his word and promise. May he shame us of our unbelief, that our unbelief bring us not to shame ! I think he will show all his people, one day, how they tied his hands and locked up his treasures, by this strong sin. " He could do no mighty work there," is a strange account of One who can do all things, and surely points out very strongly, that he has chosen faith as the *channel* through which he will convey his mercies. " Lord, increase our faith ! " What a day will that be when faith is swallowed up in sight ! Oh, eternal things ! how near, how very near are they in reality ! to what a distance removed by unbelief ! What a step between us and our place around the throne, in the company of thousand thousands, in the open vision of the precious Lamb ! May you be enabled to stand on the threshold in spirit, glad, most glad, to step into the full enjoyment of that which you have been gazing upon with longing eyes, whenever he who has appointed the moment shall be pleased to beckon you. May you stand thus gazing on the glories of your home, until your eye becomes dim for

every thing on this side of it! May you mark well its treasures, until the thorns and briars which cross your path are forgotten by your willing feet! May you count up its blessedness, until he who was made a curse to purchase it for you becomes unspeakably precious to your soul, and obtains his blood-bought place there! What manner of people ought the people of God to be? Children of the Most High; heirs of God; fellow citizens with the saints; the peculiar treasure of the King of kings; the sister, the love, the spouse of the Lord God of Hosts; exalted to heaven in privileges; too often debased to hell in their walk and conversation! Oh, the heights, the depths, in a believer's soul! Well is it that the heights, and depths in the love of his God are immeasurable. . . .

Tuesday.—I waited for this morning's post, hoping I might hear from you I trust you have found this a refreshing season to you, a spring-time in your soul. Every bursting bud speaks in animating language, and tells of better things to come; it speaks the faithfulness of our God, the sure departure of our wintry season, and the glorious body prepared for us. Soon, very soon, my beloved sister, shall our cold, stormy, dark, and dreary winter be over and gone; an eternal spring shall dawn upon us; our Sun shall no more withdraw himself; it shall be a morning without clouds; the voice of love alone shall be heard in our land. Who that had never seen the change in the natural world, looking upon the naked (apparently almost lifeless) shrub, could form an idea of what it shall be, when covered with beauteous leaves and

flowers? Thus it doth not indeed yet appear what we shall be; and when we feel the barren, almost lifeless state of our souls, we can scarcely give credit to a God, when he speaks to us of the glorious change which shall take place; when he tells us that we, who have stood comparatively like dead trees in his garden below, shall soon blossom and bud, yea, become every thing that is great, lovely, and glorious, *for we shall be like him*. Lift up your head then, for your spring draweth nigh. Trees, shrubs, birds, flowers, shall not long make the believer sigh and blush, as they can tell him of a better spring for them than he can find in his own soul. He may look forward to a far more glorious spring, when the desert over which he now mourns shall blossom as the rose, and rejoice with joy and singing. Happy are the people who are in such a case!

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

H—d, June 4th, 1821.

I FEAR you have been thinking it long since you heard from me. It *is* a comfort to me to think how much better a letter you have by you, than any your poor sister could write. It *is* sweet to remember that you have a Friend, who has promised *never* to leave you. It *is* quieting to know that you

have an infallible Counsellor; that while many a long mile lies between me and my loved sisters, your own God is dwelling *with* you, yea, and shall be *in* you. How unceasingly should we thank him for bringing us to the knowledge and enjoyment of these sweet truths, ere he separated our paths through the wilderness; without this, what an aching, what an anxious separation would it be! Oh! that all that is within us may bless the LORD! exercise yourself in this; search out causes for praise; break up the everlasting springs, and let them flow forth in the desert. He who looks for matter of praise, shall never have matter of praise to look for; and these streams are refreshing to ourselves and to all around us; yea, they are streams of gladness to souls richer far in joy, even those who have entered into the joy of their LORD. To assist you in this, let me beg you to give a part of the time devoted to prayer, to praise and thanksgiving; I am painfully aware, that it is an employment in which our souls are very dull and sluggish; but I must add, we do not practise them in it as we ought. Like ungrateful beggars, we go off, when we have asked for what we want, forgetful of what we have received, unthankful for the precious promises of what we are yet to receive. This tends to nourish that coldness and ingratitude which lock up the main spring of exertion and devotedness. If you can find no present mercies to be thankful for, (but where is the day, where is the hour, of which this complaint may be made?) then turn an eye backwards to that love with which you were loved before the foundation of the world. Look

onward to what shall be done for you, when time shall be no more. It becometh well the justified soul to be thankful: if *this* is not, I know not the created thing that should be so; and how kind is it of our gracious King to consider these acknowledgments of his worms, as *honouring* him! May he enable us to honour him yet more and more! may he teach us in *every* thing to give thanks, and tune our harps, without delay, for his perfected, chosen choir above! But truly we know not what we ask, when we desire this; nor *would* we know. Thanks to our God that he will give us no larger burden than the present moment to hold. Doubtless there must be many, and very painful, soul-emptying dispensations, ere every chord within will be in harmony to "Worthy art thou, O Lord," &c. Conflicts, crosses, and losses are the most correct tuners of our golden harps; and when we sweep the strings above, we shall find and acknowledge that not one conflict, cross, nor loss, could have been spared.

And how goes on the study of the Scriptures? I do so long to give you each a large Bible. Remember I reserve this pleasure for myself, so don't get nor receive one from any other.
I should like to know your employments for every half hour! Tell me every thing Do diligently inquire of your Master every morning, what he would have you do through the day. Do simply and faithfully wait for *his* answer, and shut your ears against your *own*. Pray that your whole heart and spirit may stand ready, and say, "Here am I, send me." Beware of gainsaying or dictating to so wise a Master. That is

frightful but common language, "Send by the hand of him whom thou *shouldst* send," (for so the original stands.) May the LORD silence such unbecoming language in the hearts of all his honoured servants, and enable them to say, "*What* thou wilt; *when* thou wilt; *how* thou wilt."

Tell me what part of the Scriptures you are reading, what other book you are reading. &c. Let me be as much as I can with you. I hope you read the Missionary Registers: their contents are calculated to "make the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing." Tell me how the Association is going on . . .

. Dear —, of whom you heard me speak, is declining very fast, but he has a hope full of immortality, blessed be God!

. Do, do earnestly pray for me, my beloved sisters; I do stand in the midst of many and great dangers: so courted, so caressed. Yet, Lord, *thou* knowest. Ah! that is humbling.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

H—d, July 14th, 1821.

IT has indeed been a joy to hear from you, and in our widely separated path, to catch some of the notes of the songs of Zion from your harp, is to hear melody indeed; to hear that which has often made me take my harp

from the willows, and has put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God. To see you, though faint, yet *pursuing*, is one of my very truest joys, and I desire to thank my God for it. May you be enabled to *press* on, may you never turn again until every foe be made your footstool! Remember, we have no armour for the back. Whilst we have every security in facing the enemy, and wrestling against him, the promised safety of a retreat insures wounds and distress. Give ALL diligence to make your calling and election sure to yourselves and to those around you. How cruelly do we rob ourselves of the heaven prepared for us in the wilderness, and testify that we should rob ourselves of an eternal heaven, were not our God greater than our hearts, and mightier than the mighty waves of our corruptions. How might we "delight ourselves in the *abundance* of peace," did we seek it at the true, the only source! and how invariably do we lose peace when we seek it elsewhere, however fair the promise. Then do acquaint yourselves with HIM, and be at peace. Study his precious character. They that know his name cannot but put their trust in him. Be often taking some measure of his love, of that *gentleness* which has brought you hitherto, of that mercy which *endureth for ever*. What an ocean of delight for sinners like ourselves in those words! Especially would I caution you against the view Satan will endeavour to give you of your *unchangeable* God, at seasons when sin and temptation bring dark clouds over your sky. O beware of thinking him such an one as yourselves; hear him say, "I

change not—with me is no variableness—mine is an unchanging love.” While he hates, and will visit the sin, he desires, as it were, to press his sorrowing child but more closely to his bosom.

LETTER XV.

To E. S. P.

H—d, 1821.

I must not waste my time and my paper in indulging my feelings and telling my beloved children how I love them. I must tell them that I am daily loaded with benefits, and really wonderfully well. But do be much in prayer for me, I have so much to lead me to form a wrong estimate of myself; though, thanks to him who convinces of sin, I *have* views which do lead me to *loathe* myself. I have not read Boston, but will endeavour to peep into it. I much love to be searched into, but we must be aware that while we are thus employed, Satan knows not to be idle. He who leads us to think lightly of sin in the commission of it, will not fail greatly to aggravate it afterwards; and though we can never see too much of the sinfulness of sin, yet it is in the wrong place when it veils Jesus from us. This is the device of the enemy, and whilst he places sin in this position, and conceals from our view our name on the breastplate of the precious High Priest, he gains his point. Little or no love is felt to him whom we

dare not call our Lord and our God. Little or no animation is felt in the walk Zionwards, the hands hang down, the knees are feeble, the world, the flesh, and the devil find an easy prey in such a worn-out, weary pilgrim; and, when he would struggle against them, as in former times, he finds his strength is departed from him, for he has lost his *sensible*, though not his actual hold, on the Beloved. How then are we to address those who are turned out of the way? Are we to tell them they were never in it? Are we to put fresh difficulties in the way of the lame? No; our God commands to comfort such, to make straight paths for them, to lift up their feeble hands, to bid them be of good cheer. Yea, I would say to such, what I have often said to my own soul, when doubting if I have taken one step Zionwards, "Come *now*, if you have never been before, take him at his word"—"Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." I am grieved to send so unsatisfactory a letter, but it comes from a heart which faithfully and tenderly loves you.

LETTER XVI.

To O. A. P.

S—n, Sept. 19th, 1821.

GLADLY do I seize the opportunity of saying a little to you, for my heart is much with you, and whilst I would be much in prayer for you, I desire to thank my

God upon every remembrance of you. Unspeakably sweet is the assurance, that the Lord has made a hedge about you, and about all that you have on every side; that he who toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye—that with him, with whom there is no future, you are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God; and may say amidst all the shadowy dangers which lie between,

“ More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits above.”

Seeing, then, that such is your portion, well may it be asked, “ What manner of person ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? ” Remember it is an assurance of these things from which, both in theory and practice, this question takes its rise. Labour, therefore, to make your calling and election sure; and fight against a doubt, as you would against an open act of sin. I do believe it is *that* sin which goes nearest to the heart of Jesus; which most afflicts and most dishonours him. Now more especially, when he will call upon you to show whose you are, let nothing rob you of the soul-strengthening, invigorating motto, “ My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Hear him calling you, “ my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled ; ” examine the mansion he has prepared for you, out of the reach of every enemy; see him bearing your *very name* on his breastplate, when he goes in before his Father, to plead the cause of his people; and endeavour to listen to his promises as if he had *but you* in the universe to whom he could make them. How valiant for

the truth would such a soldier be! They that contended with him would be as nothing, and as a thing of nought, while he was triumphantly exclaiming, "*I am more than conqueror.*" His rough road would become smooth, and the crooked places straight, because he would have entered into rest, and would be already sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Remember, you are not straitened in the Lord, he has given you the key of his treasury, yea, of his very heart: his wondrous language is, "Command thou me—ask what thou wilt, and it shall be done unto thee;" his only complaint on this subject is, "You have not, because you ask not." Do be instant and importunate in prayer. Labour after this sentiment, whenever you draw near your God, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," and *act* upon it: rise not from your knees—let him not alone, until you find that he has indeed drawn near you to do you good.

Mr. P — was mentioning the experience of one, who resolved through grace, never to make a form merely of what should be in much power. Did he draw near to God, to confess his sins? he would not leave confessing, until a shame, a sorrow, a revenge were wrought in his mind. Did he ask for more enlarged views of Christ? he would not cease asking until more of the beauties of Christ were revealed to him: and thus he acted in every duty, in every ordinance; and thus assuredly should we act, were we in real earnest about the things which belong to our peace: we should not then so often send in our solemn petition to the King, and ere he sent us an answer, run

off, careless and unconcerned, from the posts of his gate. after the first trifle which came in our way. Were he as unmindful and careless about our petitions, as we are, when and how should we receive an answer? Let me exhort you also, to be diligent in searching the Scriptures

 To him, who is *rich* in mercy and in power, I commend you.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, October 18th, 1821.

I BELIEVE it is your turn to hear from me, but indeed so many claim the turn with me, that when letter-writing time comes, I am almost paralyzed in Giant Despair's Castle; a bad place truly to be in, one where every energy of mind and body seems to be frozen up. I scarcely know any abode on earth to which Satan is more continually endeavouring to lead us; nor any language which he more diligently teaches, than that of those regions, "there is no hope."

I am very thankful to hear dear —— is enabled to see the precious door prepared in the valley of Achor. May she sit and sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when the Lord brought her up out of Egypt. We think of our God, as he loves to be thought

of, when we consider no burden of guilt too heavy for him to sustain—no multiplied transgressions too heinous for his love to multiply pardons upon. To hope against hope, and to be strong in faith, this is to give glory to God. He never complains of being dishonoured by a too implicit confidence, or a too unquestioning trust; therefore, when your heart is talking about this, tell it, it is Satan's language, and drive the father of lies from you. You know how it would grieve me if you questioned my love towards you, though, alas! I have too often given you cause. How then must it grieve him who spared not his choicest treasure, but freely gave that up for you, and who has never had any other thoughts towards you, even from everlasting, than thoughts of *peace*; who ever rests and delights in the love he bears towards you. Why, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?

Thank you very much for your interesting letter. You are indeed bound to testify that the Lord *will* provide—he will make streams in the desert, and the parched land shall become springs of waters, while his pilgrims are passing through. Then praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that is to come.

Read much the book of Providence; “whoso is wise, and will observe these things, *they* shall *understand* the loving-kindness of the Lord.” The study of that book begets a sweet confidence, and a quiet waiting upon God. We shall read it better soon, but let us endeavour to spell and pick out some of it here. See *every* step of our way *pondered* over by the Lord—*delighted in*—kept exactly in the right way. It is his plan to

lead us about; but it is not his plan, nor his way, to lead us through one needless track, or over one unnecessarily rough step. Precious, precious Guide! Oh that we may fully follow thee whithersoever thou goest!

. . . . The last few days, and since my services have not been so requisite, I have been very ill, but am now much better. My uppermost thought, in the idea that it *might* be the happy messenger, was, as far as it concerned those whom I should leave behind, about my beloved sisters; and the words, "*Death is yours;*" "all things work together for good," &c. were unspeakably sweet to me. I could confidently say and feel, "Then my death is theirs, in the covenant of blessings:" but it seems I am not yet to go We propose having such a houseful at the christening of the dear baby; but the Lord may have different purposes. One thing I know, *his* are best, and his shall stand.

LETTER XVIII.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

S—n, Dec. 22nd, 1821.

To all my beloved ones I have much to say, but I know they will be content to take it through you. To you all I wish the best blessings that are attendant on this joyful season. May it be a Christmas indeed to you, a Christ formed in your hearts, the hope of glory. May your only grief be when he is grieved, and when

your hearts too much resemble the inn at Bethlehem. May his love be shed abroad in your hearts, and manifested in your lives. Behold, what manner of persons should those be for whom the mighty God became an infant of days . . . I do very much feel for those of the Lord's family who are placed in the deadening vortex of noisy folly and unmeaning mirth ; but still I hear their guardian saying, " I *know* where thou dwellest, and that thou canst not bear these things ; I have chosen your heritage for you among the tents of Mesegh ; the why and the wherefore you know not now, but you shall know hereafter. Yet a little while, and where I am there shall you be also." With such assurances well may they take up old Jacob's language, " It is enough." The path of duty may be intricate, and one that can only be discovered by much prayer and watchfulness, and diligent attention to the counsels of God. Consistency, without obstinacy ; decision, without moroseness ; cheerfulness, without levity ; courtesy, without undue compliance ; fidelity, without forwardness ; indifference to worldly pursuits, without the appearance of pride,—these and many more, which I have not time to enumerate, are things to be aimed at, but not easily to be obtained. May we all have grace to put the touchstone to every thing in which we engage, " Can I ask a blessing upon it ?"

And now, I would fain tell you of the Lord's mercies lately vouchsafed to us. With a heart dancing for joy, did I this morning escort our dearest sister round the garden several times. But painfully have I felt that joy is not gratitude ; that I have been too happy to be

seriously thankful. When I have knelt down to try to praise our God, I have had but little command over thoughts *inebriated* with joy. These things, I know, ought not so to be; this is not spiritual joy; this is not rejoicing as though I rejoiced not. But I have been so swallowed up with sorrow, anxiety, painfulness, watchings, forebodings, unbelief, self-accusation, and I know not what, that this deliverance seems like a dream. I do desire to speak to the praise of my God, and to the encouragement of all my fellow pilgrims, that I was supported through this trying time. He only could then consider my trouble; he only knew the adversities of my soul, and truly his left hand has been under my head, and his right hand hath embraced me. I would encourage you to trust him for every day of trial, for truly he has laid up strength proportioned to it I thought you would like these particulars, and you know how to praise and pray for us. May your hearts be in readiness.

LETTER XIX.

To O. A. P.

S—n, Jany. 1822.

GLADLY do I avail myself of this opportunity of writing to you I scarcely know how to mention what has taken place since last I wrote to you. I do desire to

speak loudly and simply of the wondrous dealing of my God; but I find

* "I cannot make his praises known
But self-applause comes in."

I sometimes hope that some peaceable fruits of my late sorrows and anxieties are beginning to appear. I hope the world is more clouded; but perhaps it is only that the shadow of this temporary cloud has not yet left the valley. I hope I am enabled to feel more of a quiet confidence; but perhaps this is only that I have just been forced to see that the end of the Lord is very pitiful. But I speak ignorantly when I speak of my state: it is my comfort that there is One who does understand me. My snares have been many, but I have been most watchfully guarded, and I hope I am viler than ever in mine own eyes There is no *lasting* rest for a harassed soul, save in the precious ark. O! trust that, my beloved sister, for all that is to come upon you. It does outride the highest waves; it is mightier than the voice of many waters. Be assured there is no possible trial appointed for you but there is proportioned strength. Don't fear the worst day or the heaviest storm. You have a refuge which can keep out the most violent, as well as the most trifling tempest. Nay, we often feel less of the *former*, for we realize our danger more, and run more completely into our strong tower. In the latter we sometimes think we can do without shelter, and we are brought painfully to feel our insufficiency.

. . . . Do not suppose I am at all perplexed by the

apparent alteration of plans : I know there is no *real* alteration of that path which has been *winnowed* and *weighed out* from eternity. Every step is ordered for each of us, and is in the right way. I feel assured that beloved M. will be blessed and made a blessing : she is sent “ into the land of the Chaldeans for good.”

I must finish, though my heart is still full. When I would tell of mercies, joys, comforts, blessings, they are quite more than I am able to express ; they have prevented us ; they have followed us ; they have compassed us ; they have crowned us ; they have loaded us. But, indeed, my time is gone. May the Lord bless my precious sisters, and prepare them for whatever he has prepared for them. Let your hearts be *knit* together in love— a *nice* word—beware of dropping the stitch.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

S—n, February 28th, 1822.

.... WHEN you were but three years old, my beloved sister, the third of March was a day of many prayers and tears with me, so an old journal of mine testifies, and memory bears witness to the truth of the testimony. Do you ask why I wept, why I prayed, when I knew little or nothing of the worth of a soul? The mainspring of my requests on your behalf was,

that self in all things might be glorified. I wept over whatever was likely to rob me of the only reward I then cared about, the praise of men, and which gave Satan the lie in the fair promise he was repeatedly making, that I should "be as God," able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. Thus did I sacrifice to devils, and not to God. But, blessed be our most precious Intercessor! other prayers, other tears were offered up on your behalf, yea, *strong crying and tears*, yea, tears of blood had long, long before flowed for my child, tears which when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary were weighty with unmingled desires that *God* in all things should be glorified; that you should be a soul to show forth *his* praise through time and through eternity.

In looking back upon the past year, you doubtless find great depths of remorse, shame and confusion of face broken up, while the windows of heaven have never been opened for you but to shower down mercies. You remember, perhaps, that this is the day which I trust I may call *my* birth-day, a day indeed to be much remembered by me. This is *THAT* day of the Lord, on which by strength of hand, and gentleness of heart, he brought me from the iron furnace. Eight years now, has he suffered my manners in the wilderness, since the day that I knew him, or rather was known of him, and oh, what manners have they been! such as no earthly friend would have endured for eight days; nay, often not for eight hours. Cold and cruel neglect, deadness towards him, and life towards his enemies; unfruitfulness,

ingratitude, murmurings, limitings, temptings and tryings of his Spirit, earthliness of mind and heart, harshness towards his precious members, unfaithfulness in stewardship, pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, contempt of his Word, presumptuous sins. But I shall fill my paper, if I pretend to give a list of my sins, yea, the world itself could not contain the books which might be written on this subject. You have learned to spell out many words in the black list, whilst with grief, you acknowledge, "to *my* heart they belong." Be it so, yea, let them be ten thousand times more than I can mention, sins which you are ready to imagine no one is guilty of but yourself, *heart* sins, secret sins, repeated sins, sins of presumption, of ignorance, of negligence; yet, of this be assured, they are *pardoned* long before they are made known to you. They are blotted out of God's book before they are written on the book of your conscience; he will never keep a copy against you; his Spirit has undertaken to write them on your heart on condition, (if I may so speak,) that the blood of his Son should blot them out of the records in heaven. "The iniquity of Jacob shall be sought for, *and shall not be found.*" "*I have* blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins," &c.

These are the precious truths which I am this day endeavouring to press upon my wounded spirit. *Wherefore?* to encourage it in its vileness? in its distance from God? in its pride and presumption? Nay; but that I may remember my ways, and be ashamed; that I may remember and be confounded, and never open

my mouth any more because of my shame, seeing that the Lord is pacified towards me for all that I have done. There is mercy with him, THAT he may be feared; there are multiplied forgivenesses in him, that he may be loved. O that we may cultivate a sense of this until we are more and more pained when we fret him and make him to serve with our sins! May we carefully shun that "abundance of idleness," which, as far as I can trace, is the source of so many sins of commission as well as of omission. Gird up the loins of your mind; *run, press, agonize*. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of *love and peace* shall be with you.

For the future, I would say to you, what I am forced to say to my own heart again and again, (ah! how vainly do I speak unless the Spirit speak through me,) "Be careful for NOTHING; BUT in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." If you are sent into the land of the Chaldeans, it is for your good. If you are taken into the wilderness, it is that he *may speak to your heart*; if he crosses your desires and inclinations, it is the hedge of thorns, planted by the hand of mercy, to preserve you "from your own destructions." Endeavour to cultivate a quiet confidence in him who not only has all power in heaven and in earth, but who loves you as his own soul, and esteems you his peculiar treasure.

. . . . You would have been delighted with sweet little C. had you heard and seen him last night. He came to me to pray, having crowded his band with

snowdrops, shouting, "Do see, do see; me sink me's just like snow itself. . . . Now we'll pay." (*pray.*) Hardly able to keep my countenance, "I said, "C., which shall you think most of, good Friend, or snowdrops?" Putting his head on one side, and pausing a little; "Me sink about snowdrops." "But then, C., that's as bad as little black boys praying to idols; snowdrops can't take care of C." "Shall me take them out, aunt H?" (This I could not bring myself to ask for when he had arranged them so beautifully.) I said, "C. may keep them if he thinks he can help thinking about them." He stood considering a little while. "No me can't, aunt H., me can't, so me sink me'd better put snowdrops KITE away." So saying, he pulled them all off, and carried them to a chair at the other end of the room, where he could not see them. I admired the triumph, and could but learn from the dear child not to trifle with temptation.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

L——n, May 21st, 1822.

As we are likely to be in an idle hustle for the next two or three weeks, I will try and make out something in the shape of a letter, though I have little at present to communicate which can either interest or amuse you. One theme, indeed, is ever new, ever interesting,

ever cheering. Oh for a live coal from the altar to touch my heart and my lips, and take away this iniquitous backwardness and listlessness in speaking of our Beloved. . . . I *was* ashamed of myself as I ate up every word R—— uttered about you on his return from London—how you looked—where you sat—where you stood—what you said—what you did—all was replete with interest for me. I could like to hear the same things over and over again, and always find something to delight and interest while they related to my precious child. But a still small voice within would be heard. If the case be so with an object beloved, where is thy kindness to thy *heavenly* Friend? Is his name as ointment poured forth? Is his love better than wine? Ah, Lord! come and manifest thyself unto me, and my heart shall be drawn after thee. I more and more find that this is our wisdom, our privilege, our safety, our heaven, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To gaze on this bright Sun, until our eyes are dimmed for every earthly object—to cultivate a sense of his love towards us, until all other love appear low, mean, and selfish. To put our finger into the print of the nails, and to thrust our hand into his side, till swallowed up in rapturous joy, we can exclaim, “*My Lord, and my God.*” May the language of our hearts be, in every duty and in every ordinance—in the book of nature—in the book of Providence—“we would see Jesus.” We should not then have long to go about the streets of Zion mournfully.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

February 27th, 1823.

As the ever dear third of March draws near, the tide of my tenderest affections will overflow, and my most grateful thoughts will rush back to that *third* anniversary of your natal day, when I first dimly discovered the hole of the pit in which you lay: and, filled with hopes and fears, looked out for some help for you; beginning, as I then did, in some measure, to feel that I was not quite able to hew you out of the quarry: but all this (I repeat with shame) was only, that I in all things might be glorified. I know you must be tired of hearing of these things; but I find in my own experience, that there is nothing much more profitable to my soul, than to be put in remembrance of "*my birth and my nativity,*" by my God; and I find that when my soul is in a languid, dull, ungrateful state, fretting my God, and pressing him down with my iniquities, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves, he may say to me at such a time, "Thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth." The remembrance of what we were to God, and what he was to us; the heaps of provocations on our side, and the heaps of mercies on his; the setting his love upon us, because he *would* love us, having a desire towards us, and passing by others, who seemed to promise fair to bring him more glory, and to serve

him better ; the tender comforts with which he comforts his new-born babes—the kind consideration with which he gently led us—the patience with which he instructed us—the forbearance with which he bore with our froward tempers—the refreshing seasons he gave us in his banqueting-house—the loving correction with which he made us great ;—these, and an innumerable multitude of tender mercies, when brought to our hearts by the precious Remembrancer, are calculated to make us loathe ourselves in our own sight ; rest, with unshaken confidence, in a love so strong ; lean, with holy joy, on a bosom so tender ; and long, with ardent gratitude, to make some return for mercies so countless. May we, then, ever remember the days of our youth ! But we have yet more to remember ; even, how he has *suffered* our manners in the wilderness ; or, “ fed us as a nurse beareth or feedeth her child.” Oh may we *well* remember the way by which the Lord has led us, until every string of humility, gratitude, confidence, love and praise in our souls, make sweet melody unto the Lord.

I do most sincerely congratulate you, my beloved sister, on arriving at the close of another year ; for, while I esteem it a privilege, a favour, a gift, to live, I daily feel an increasing conviction that it is gain to die. When I was at your age, yes, when I was almost your age in the spiritual life, life appeared to me in very different colours from what it now does. I am conscious *now*, of having anticipated much from a land which is *greatly* polluted, while I realized but little those views which make life below really desirable. Under tem-

porary clouds, indeed, I had more ardent longings to be gone ; but this often arose from disappointment, excited feelings, self-will, and love of ease, which was but too evident when my earthly sun shone out again, and made me willing, yea, desirous to bask in its beams. I do not, I hope, wish to speak of self for the sake of pleasing self ; but I would guard you against that delusive glare, which Satan spreads over terrestrial things ; and I would have you aim at, and pray for, that only quiet, stayed, peaceful life in the flesh—that life freed from disappointments, cares, and griefs, living by the faith of the Son of God. Not, not, *not* as though I had already attained it ; (which you may suppose I would imply by what I have said ;) but this I *follow after*. I would fain have you learn this lesson with less difficulty, with fewer stripes and chastisements, and less torture to flesh and blood, than I have : but, perhaps, this is oil, of which we can impart little or none, and which must be bought at a great price. My precious Teacher alone knows what it has cost me, even the very little I now have, and truly I could have purchased it from no other ; for he kindly suffered me to pay, just as I was able to bear it ; here a little, and there a little ; he gave it me out of things which, in any other hands, would have proved my destruction ; and enabled me again and again to say, “Out of the eater came forth meat.” Might I be the honoured instrument of imparting any wisdom to you, from dear-bought experience, I would say again and again, beware of creature love : beware how you say of any person, circumstance, place, or thing, “~~This~~ same shall comfort me.” The very

thought is rebellion against the decree of our God,—stirs up his jealousy and forces him to turn comforts into crosses. He only is the true Noah; he is the rest; he is the refreshing; he is our peace; he is our comforter; and he will bring us to feel and to acknowledge that other things are only mercies and comforts, as they are enjoyed in him, resigned up to his care and management, and used for his glory. I do pray that you may live only for him, who lived, and died, and rose again, for you. Then shall every added year, yea, every added moment, be a source of eternal thanksgiving, and swell your loud hallelujahs; and though, in looking back on the past year, you will, I know, say, “It has not been thus with me;” yet in one sense it has, though you thought not so, nor even meant so; your every sin shall but celebrate more loudly the victories of that blood which cleanseth from *all* sin; your fallen Dagon shall but set forth the glories of the precious ark; your self-inflicted wounds and sores shall display the skill of Zion’s Physician; your wanderings shall testify the faithfulness of that watchful Shepherd, who will bring you in safety to the fold; your stubbornness shall be to the praise of his patience; your hastiness, to that of his long-suffering gentleness; so that in spite of sin and Satan, Christ shall in *all* things be glorified. Sorrow not then over the past, as one without hope, even a hope, that all this shall turn to your salvation, and to the praise of the glory of the dear Redeemer. Though you have often robbed yourself of your heaven here, remember, for your comfort, you cannot rob the Lord of his glory. May the God of all

grace be with us, and knit our hearts to him by his tender mercies!

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

October, 1823.

How kind of you to think of me on the day of my passing another milestone! The sweet daily text was, "all my springs are in thee." O that I could indeed testify it was so! very many dear springs of joy were opened around me on that day, but it seemed as if it were only to prove to me that Marah has tainted every fountain but one. There is a bitter in every other sweet; an emptiness in every other fulness. My predominant feeling, as I passed the memento, was, "this is *not* my rest;" but with how sadly little thankfulness did I realize, "there *remaineth* a rest;" but there is a wonderful sweetness in it to a weary pilgrim. I have been harassed with the fear that I was not where the Lord would have me to be, that I arranged coming here for my own pleasure, and that I misconstrued the will of the Lord, in *finding a ship ready to go to Tarshish*. But now I feel sweetly contented and thankful, and can look up with confidence to my employer, and ask, "what wouldest *thou* have me to do?" Don't forget to be very earnest in prayer for us. I trust we may say, ours is a joy which will not make

ashamed; though I anticipate many a disappointment from seed which has quickly sprung up, but which I much fear is sown upon a rock. Every labourer needs this, that he may learn to look more earnestly to that husbandman who alone can prepare the soil, that he may deeply feel the work is not accomplished by man's might, nor by the excellency of his wisdom, but by the life-giving power of the eternal Spirit. Do pray that that precious wind may come, and breathe upon these slain, may revive those who are drooping, and cause the spices to flow forth in every garden, that our Beloved may come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

. . . . I sometimes feel a naughty shrinking from all that lies before me: ah! it may be not another minute out of the haven of sweet, eternal rest! May I joyfully know, that whether I live, I live unto the Lord, or whether I die, I die unto the Lord, that living or dying, I am his. I do pray that you may all more than ever feel his love shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto you.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

H——d, Feb. 28th, 1824.

THOUGH I think you must have had enough of "birth-day letters" from me, yet I cannot let so dear a day as

the third of March pass unnoticed. If here I can thank my God upon every remembrance of it, while I see her whom it ushered into the world a weary pilgrim, beset with snares on every hand, compassed with a body of death; what shall I say, when I see her at home, in an everlasting rest, with all the beauty and the joy of her own Lord beaming from her! Oh, let the light of love and gratitude and joy ever shine on that day, on which an heir to such blessedness was born! and then to remember to what you *might* have been born! oh, how shall we provoke one another to louder and sweeter hallelujahs! and *here* may we be improving daily in our song! is there not a cause? is not every day bringing us nearer to the haven where we would be? Is not every event driving or drawing us onward? Is not the very plague of our heart forcing out groans, which are breaking the cords of its power? Is not even sin, bitter as it is, working for good and driving us homewards? then let us *sing* in the ways of the Lord. But, perhaps, you will be ready to say, ah! it is easy work to sing in the ways of the *Lord*; but I too often go on in my *own* ways. Well, your own ways shall *correct* you, shall prove the faithfulness of your good Shepherd; and though I should be sorry to hear you sing while *in* them, yet you shall in the end sing *for* them, and doubly praise the grace which has kept so straying a sheep. Receive, then, my warmest congratulations, as you pass your milestone; and though you cannot decipher how many more miles you have to go, yet one thing I trust you can plainly perceive upon it; "To your Father's

house, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God."

I often think, and I believe have often told you, how I tried to help you past your third milestone, imagining I was to carry the whole burden myself, and so to deserve to get all the praise of doing *every* thing for you, that I should then have indignantly spurned the offer of any assistance, had I heard the very King of Glory offering to help me in my arduous undertaking. O the miracle of grace that ever brought so peculiarly proud a heart to stoop, and to cry out, "Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." I can truly say, while I was yet speaking to him for you, he took you up in his arms, and carried you in his bosom, and none, no, none is able ever again to pluck you out of it.

LETTER XXV.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

S—n, Jan. 13th, 1825.

.... Your bursts of affection are very soothing to my heart; yet when I remember—nay, when I feel too often in daily experience, that strong *affections*, make strong *afflictions*, I would sometimes fain weaken the former in you, with a view to lessening the latter.

.... We hope publicly to dedicate the dear child to the Lord, on Wednesday, and trust you will be with us in spirit. I shall be glad when it has taken place,

for I don't like the bare appearance of withholding one day longer than is absolutely necessary, . . . Our little gourds, when most flourishing, appear to be only giving shelter and vigour to the worm at the root, while those of whom we dared not be so exceedingly glad, in the prospect of their being spared to their beloved parents, are still permitted to twine their feeble little tendrils around them. Our God is truly excellent in counsel, and takes immense pains to teach us to possess as though we possessed not. How perversely we do this in those things which we might possess as possessions; while those things which are but as the "shade of a shadow," we would fain lay fast hold of. How seldom do we see one living upon the Pearl of great price, as if it *really* belonged to him; or with the heart in heaven, as one who has a real, incorruptible, unfading inheritance there. May we be enabled more and more to manifest that we walk by faith, not by sight; and that they who have believed do enter into rest. Were we truly the epistles of Christ, written out so plainly, that we might be known and read of all men, how many lines in the epistle would be, *rejoicing evermore, rejoicing in the Lord always, &c. &c.*; but alas! the blots and blunders in other parts cause us too often to omit these lines. Yet it won't do to pore too long over our blunders; it is by *beholding the glory* of the Lord, that we are changed into the same image.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, Dec. 12th, 1825.

I MUST write a few lines to-day, though I *feel* very busy, and as if I could not get time, when probably had I more of that hope which rouses the energies, and of that system and method which enables every little wheel to move freely and merrily in its right place, I might find time enough and to spare. I generally observe, that those who have least to do, find least time for what they have to do, and think the most of their little performances.

To-morrow our monthly committee meetings begin, and I am engaged two days to stay with Mr. and Mrs. M——. I entertain the sweet hope that the Lord has afore prepared work in Christ Jesus for me to do there. Truly he does ordain peace for us, when we are enabled to believe that he *has wrought* all our works in us and for us. Blessed peace! when we can lie as a poor tool in his dear wonder-working hand; give up the fruitless, painful idea, that we are to do any thing, and be content that he should use us *as* he will, *when* he will, and *how* he will, and glorify himself in us. Pray that I may know more of this joy and peace, and quietness and confidence, self-renunciation and singleness of eye.

I hope you are less inclined to question the wisdom and tender love of your infallible Guide. May you

drink into Exodus xxiii. 20—23. Have you not already found him an adversary to your adversaries? Is he not bringing you to the place which he has prepared? Could this link in the chain be spared? "Take care how you talk to God about taking it out." May your heart *stand fast*, trusting in the Lord—no vessel, whether small or great, that is hung upon that nail which is fastened in a *sure* place, ought to be removed, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

To O. A. P.

S—n, March 2d, 1826.

YOUR letter just received, was calculated to show us what manner of spirit we are of, and whether in small things, as well as in great, we could unreservedly acknowledge, that the Judge of all the earth does right. . . . But blessed be he who stilleth the raging of the sea of corruption, and the madness of his people, after the first *swell* to let us know what a storm there might be but for his power. All is now a calm, and my very heart does trust him for every *step* in each of our paths; and stayed upon his faithfulness and tender love, again enjoys perfect peace. I trust it is so with you, my precious sister. It is *not* man that has arranged it. These wheels within wheels are of no human machinery; their rings are

full of eyes, and they follow him who is gone to seek a resting-place for you. Thither tends every step of our way, whether it be up hill or down, smooth or rough. Be this enough for us to know, and may our only concern be to glorify him, who will so soon strip us of the attire of mourners, and make us glorious in his glory. Oh, when we find him ministering to, and attending upon, each one of his children, as if he had but that one to attend to, how should we endeavour individually to lay out ourselves for him, as if he had no other child to serve him!

Wherever your tent may be pitched, may this consideration swallow up every other, "What can I do for my God in this part of his vineyard? what lessons am I to learn here? My unerring God has placed me here; therefore there can be no other spot on earth or in heaven where I could so much glorify him." May he fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness in you, and the work of faith with power. May added days be but added love and admiration of him who walketh with you by the way. May you be enabled to cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, to acquaint yourself more and more with him, until your peace flow in as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.

I feel very much for — and —; but this little separation is just what was needful; there is no better remedy as far as means go. Absence is a kind of death, in which failings are buried out of sight, and excellencies, before unperceived, spring up and flourish. Long illness jaundices the mind, often vitiates its taste,

and can make the most savoury earthly friend unsavoury. Such circumstances are calculated to give peculiar emphasis to that precious declaration of our unspeakably precious Friend, "I change not."

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, February 26th, 1828.

How naughtily I do shrink from writing this letter, my precious child! When I let nature realize where and what you are at the opening of this year, I am smitten and sore wounded, yea, my heart within me is desolate. But come, thou blessed, evidence of things not seen! come and draw the picture, and I shall see that you never yet entered upon a year with so bright, so cheering a prospect. . . . Now, every step brings you nearer to the tender, loving Father that begat you; and, whilst the vale of tears is indeed a homeless wilderness, the glorious home above shines forth with increased beauty and attraction, whilst you behold a blessed Father there, and in the language of joyful triumph exclaim, "So shall we be ever with the LORD!" Could you, at the entrance upon the year, which you are now leaving behind for ever, have had a blank to fill up, opposite to the inquiry, "What wilt thou that I shall do for

thee?" how, think you, would you have filled it up? Would not the glowing language of every corner of your heart have been, "Oh that my precious, suffering father might live before thee!" And now, behold, the Lord hath heard thee in this thing also. He has indeed granted unto this beloved one *LIFE*, even length of days for ever and ever.

Then do not much remember the days of this deathful life, because God answereth thee in the joy of thy heart. Your nest has been stirred up indeed; but, when the eagle will not suffer her young to remain in the nest, she *spreadeth abroad* her wings, *taketh* them, *beareth* them *on* her wings. And shall we complain, because called upon to exchange a poor nest of sticks and thorns for the soft feathers of the Lord's wing? Is it better to be left tossing on this restless rest, than to dwell all day long between his shoulders? ●, my child! he hath done thee no wrong. If he flutter over thee, it is that he may more entirely bear the burden of thee. If he take away thy father a few days before he take thee, it is that thou mayest find a double Father in him.

Do you think it is all well with me, because I thus speak? Nay, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that I cannot think or act the thing that I would, however I may speak; and I am humbled in knowing what the struggle is within. I try to ask myself, what *fruit* have you of these tears; for, upon this it hinges, whether they should be stedfastly, prayerfully, watchfully opposed, or whether they may

be given way to. Ah, how many of them need washing in floods of very different tears, and plunging in the stream which flows from Calvary. I do abhor myself inexpressibly for such coldness and apathy, instead of more devoted service. I am stupidly taken up in looking at the little speck of a separation—nothing, just nothing; instead of dwelling on the blessed prospect of being for ever in the same happy, happy home. I sometimes wonder how any thing but a tear of joy can be manufactured in me. . . . Well, after this you will not think of your poor sister *above that which is written*; and truly you will then think low enough—a fine rule to measure by truly! . . . I do bless my God for all the comfort and support he has bestowed upon you; I do see that he is faithful that hath promised strength according to the day. May he enable you yet more and more to look unto him, and you will indeed be lightened in the thickest gloom. You will evidence that the believer walks by faith, and not by sight; that he has meat to eat that the world knows not of, and joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. The Lord grant you a treble portion of his Spirit. I find those nicely quieting words, when something whispers, I am greatly afflicted, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.” Oh! to realize where we might justly all have been, and that for eternity!

. . . . How too much I long for you here; but the Lord has made every thing beautiful *in his season*, and we ought not to long for pleasures *out of season*

What a letter this is for you. But you have that speaks better things to you. Hear what God Lord will say unto you; for he will speak *peace* to his people. May the voice of the turtle be heard in your land, then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, February 28th, 1829.

It appears to me now almost an empty form to pretend to address an annual epistle to you; yet, lest you should at all misconstrue silence, or feel your heart sink next Tuesday morning from the sound of "No letter," I will just write something, if it is only a re-assurance of my very, very, tender, faithful love. But have I indeed nothing more to say? What, talk of my poor selfish love, and not a word of everlasting, never-changing love? No, it must not be. I must talk to myself if you need not my poor lisplings; and oh! that my own cold heart may be warmed on this *my* birth-day. Fifteen years to-day, since the hand of covenant love let down the curtain, and shut out the fair prospect of earthly shadows—fifteen years to-day, since to my weary, wandering, tearful eyes, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, and the sweet sound was heard, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" Fifteen years ago,

and all my father's house were but dead men before my Lord the King : yet did he set the vilest of them among them that did eat at his own table. After such matchless, free love, what right had I to cry any more to the King, had he stripped me of all beside, and bid me travel alone and desolate, to the home which he had prepared for me? But this was but the beginning of mercies to me ; it was but as the opening of my mouth to cry for what I would unto him. Ah ! had I been told then that *every* brother, *every* sister, that a *father* should come and sit with me at the banquet which the King had prepared, I should scarcely have conceived it possible that an earthly tabernacle could have contained a heart so loaded with benefits ; that any thing short of the hallelujahs of heaven could have satisfied my bursting soul. My soul, my soul, how canst thou forget such benefits, or remain so cold under the remembrance of them ! Nor may I stop at *calling* mercy. Oh the miracle, the hourly miracle, of keeping, restoring, restraining mercy, the miracle of that mercy which has made the precious, precious head of the family triumphant in death, and taken him first home, to welcome his beloved children. Ah, when I remember his welcomes on earth ! Now I am down again, grovelling in dust and tears. *Could* a heavenly home have wanted an attraction, we have indeed one, which even an earthly heart can feel ; and all above and all below cry, with redoubled power, *Onward*, onward !

You don't know how much, how naughtily much I feel, at the accounts of the cracks in your clay house. I long to try and plaster them up for you, but perhaps

the inner man would call it cruel work, and say I was shutting out beams of light and warmth. Well, I would leave you with him who has loved you so much longer, so much better, than I have. If health, if ease be good for you, he will not withhold them. If weakness and pain are good for you, I would not ask him to withhold them. I have but a small share of strength, but he kindly shows me it is quite as much as I can turn to good account, more would be poison to the inner man. My independent spirit is thus kept dependent; and he thus makes me cling continually to the posts of his doors, waiting for a supply of hourly strength for hourly work. When I think I have a little hoard, and devise great things, I am soon laid very low. Blessed, blessed Keeper, truly he does keep me every moment. Do not think I am really ill. I have no complaint, but weakness, which keeps me clinging to my Father, and I do not ask to have it otherwise. I would only desire as much strength as will glorify him.

. . . . Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME SISTERS, WHILE THEY
WERE SPENDING THE WINTER AT NICE.

LETTER XXX.

Sept. 1829.

. . . . I TRUST I feel the blessedness of having a Father decided as he is wise, and powerful as he is indulgent,

to govern such restive, froward children as we are. The struggle of the last Sunday with you, though it revived all my tantalizing feelings, served more powerfully to prove the mighty hand which was leading you onward, and the unvarying voice, which had said concerning your journey, "*This is the way.*" Yes, my dearest sisters, again my spirit is calm; and if a breath of mine could break this link of your journeyings in this great wilderness, I would struggle to withhold that breath. Yea, I should deprecate as the greatest cruelty the removal of this little rough link, on which are hung golden mercies for eternity. You told me once a truth which fastened on my mind, in proportion as it commended itself most powerfully to my judgment and experience,

" While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none."

It is not in S——n, it is not in F——e, it is not in T——n, it is not in N——e, to make us happy or unhappy. But it is in our God to give us to sing in a prison, with feet fast bound in the stocks. It is of our God to create a craving void in the fulness of sufficiency, and to force the vagrant mind to cry out, "All this availeth me nothing." I know not the form in Christ's school, which is exempt from its difficult lesson; or the lot that is without its crook. I used to look forward, as dear little R——t does, to the time when I should have done with schooling! but we must wait till we get quite home, to have lesson books put by for ever. But whatever are the gradations in our books,

or in whatever shape the lesson comes to us, this is the one grand, blessed object aimed at by our wondrous Teacher in all, "Acquaint now thyself with *Him*, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

. But you will be anxious for all the news; though there is no news like this, "The morning cometh;" a morning without a cloud, a morning which shall never be succeeded by a night. O that we may comfort one another with these words! &c. &c.

LETTER XXXI.

1829.

. You must send me word whether we are feeding together; it seems so to keep up our communion as saints, and when I get to any rich herbage, I think, How nice for my beloved sisters to-day! But ah, I am forgetting the high prerogative, "*I* will feed my flock, and *I* will cause them to *lie down*, saith the Lord." Not one blade of grass can we feed upon, not one inch of a resting-place can we find, but as he gives it. What is most sweet to *me* in a psalm, may be dry and unsavoury to *you*; and where *you* lie down in peace, and take your rest, *I* may not have found a place so much as to set my foot upon. But with what happy confidence may we look up to our Shepherd, and say, "Thou, Lord, knowest thy servant; thou knowest the food convenient for me; thou knowest the aching, weary part of my soul, and the *when*, and the *where*, and the *how*, that it should rest." I hope sometimes a

true glow of thanksgiving does come over my soul to him, who so patiently, so perseveringly, so tenderly, so faithfully, is guiding me into all truth, according to his most gracious covenant engagement. How precious that word *guiding* is ! Not pointing, and leaving me to go alone ; not driving and dispiriting me with more than I am able to bear ; not directing, and then committing me into the hands of servants, even were those servants more than twelve legions of angels ; but taking me by the hand, encouraging me as I go forward ; waiting for me, when I am weary ; supporting me, when I am overwhelmed with the greatness of the way ; taking advantage of every winding and every incident, to give me some fresh glimpse of him whom my soul loveth ; KNOWING my soul in adversity, and applying with his own hand, the hand of THE Comforter, some truth that makes me hasten to put off my sackcloth, and gird my soul with gladness ; bringing songs in the night from more of his sweet statutes, and giving me to realize the truth of his precious commission, "He shall glorify me." I trust I have been enabled a little better to see that wondrous hand, bringing me flesh and bread in the wilderness. Old natural memory would always be taking the credit of it ; but oh, she can never bring a verse as the Comforter can : it may be appropriate, but it wants unction ; it wants the *demonstration* of the Spirit and power. I believe, did we more honour him, by realizing this, our souls would be fat and flourishing. . . .

.... Oh what a view of our Beloved did we have this morning in the 88th Psalm! his precious soul *full* of troubles, that he might not leave one to rankle in our hearts; laid in the lowest pit, to bring us poor prisoners up out of it; in darkness, that we might have marvellous light; a man of sorrows from his youth, that our joy might be full. The last verse seems to shame and soothe me. When mourning over the separation from my beloved sisters, my inmost soul cries through the tears of the old heart, "All right, all right; bless the Lord for his wise and tender care of his weak and foolish lamb." You made too much of me, and I made far too much of you; the Brother whom I most neglected, is the Brother that sticketh closest, loveth with the most tenderness, and checreth with the best entertainment. I would not have it otherwise; yet I knew that he had seen my naughty tears, and it was sweet to me to be told this morning that he could sympathize with me, even in the smarting of the strokes of the deserved rod; and that *he* had uttered the complaint, "lover and friend hast thou put far from me;" and then that "*thou*" is so precious; not miles, not health, not sickness, not life, not death; but "*thou*," whose thoughts towards me are *only* thoughts of peace, and not of evil; all to give me the end I long for, to make Christ all in all.

.... "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Will you try and dig into this mine with me for this year, my beloved sister? Here we inherit *substance*: the *Supplier*, the rule by which the supply is measured out,

the channel through which it comes, what it is thus to be supplied; how much and how many, &c. &c. I do feel it such a mercy that he says not, "all your *wants*." I should be afraid of every lurking wish, and expect the sorrows of an indulged child: but there is no spoiled child in our Father's family; while he will richly, abundantly, invariably supply **EVERY need**, he has perfect firmness to withhold the enfeebling indulgence, the cloying sweet. I can sometimes tune up a little song, even now, for the withholding of things that I was mad upon; and then I think, "now I am for ever cured of wishing or *rathering*." Yes, till carnal reason mounts the throne again, and would be as God, knowing good and evil. At such wretched seasons, I cry, why am I thus? and how cheering the answer! "Two manner of nations are in me indeed, but the elder shall *serve* the younger." Sick, nearly to death, of self, increasingly wondrous and dear is the truth, "ye are complete in him." I am kept alive with that fat of the kidneys of wheat, and go in the strength of it many days. . . .

LETTER XXXII.

December 31st, 1829.

WITH whom can I end this year more to my heart's content, than with you, my beloved sisters, endeared by added days and years of faithful, tender love; now, if

possible, yet more endeared by a strangely immense distance, and to be yet unspeakably dearer, when a few more years are past, and we meet in our Father's house, to go no more out. There shall be no more sea, no more night, no more death, with its innumerable fore-runners, keeping our hearts in jeopardy for each withering gourd around and far off; no more curse, no more a pricking brier and grieving thorn flourishing in this vile, earthly body. Ah, how hardly can we stretch our poor thoughts to the skirts of these negatives, whilst of the "*shall be*," we can but echo the cry of one, who entered with peculiar nearness and clearness into the very heart and mind of his God, and say, "It doth *not* yet appear." There is, however, a "*but*" there, which assuredly concentrates all that the believer most longs for, most prays for, and most grieves in his want of, here below. Sing, then, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with *all* the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

As schoolboys cut off their notches daily, so would I cut off my 1829, and congratulate myself, and congratulate you, that another year of our school-time is over, and that we are one year nearer to our endless holidays. In looking back upon the year, how utterly insignificant does it appear whether this day was happy, or that unhappy; whether I was strong or weak, at ease or in pain: but to have grieved my Lord, or to have done his pleasure; to have murmured at, or to have loved his will; to have promoted his glory, or to have been swallowed up in my own petty concerns; to have lived for him, or to have lived for self;—O these are iniqui-

ries so overwhelming, that I could almost be willing to live the year over again, if the answers to them might but be less acutely painful. This has been a very sluggish, barren year with me. That marginal reading is quite true, "She that liveth *delicately* is dead while she liveth;" and I seem, owing to ill health, to have pampered this poor old casket, till the jewel has scarcely been thought of. But even this shall turn to my salvation, through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and, let me add, through your prayers. This bad year cannot, by men or devils, be shut out of the *all* things, which God has shut in, to work for my good; and I can see written upon it, in letters glowing with faithful love, "to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to do thee good at thy latter end." And after all, as I fall ashamed before my God, I can still say, "The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever:" and while I would sweep down my worthless cobwebs, and say to my filthy rags, "Get you hence," I can joyfully combine John xix. 30; xvi. 10; 2 Cor. v. 21; and Rom. v. 1. Here is quietness, for here is *the* rest, and the refreshing, where-with the weary may rest; here is a righteousness with which the Father himself is well pleased, whereof he hath given an assurance, in that he hath loosed our surety from the prison of the grave, and we see him no more, until he appear without sin unto salvation. We see him, indeed, by the eye of faith, but it is *sitting*, his work *quite* done, entered into his redemption sabbath. Oh that we, his members, may be so strong in faith, that we may also enter into rest! Only in proportion

as we do, shall we cease to speak our own words, and to do our own pleasure. Only as we do, shall we be delivered from bearing burdens on the Sabbath, and clogging ourselves with a yoke, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

I have much enjoyed the 3d verse of Psalm c. It is so comfortable to know that we have not made ourselves, and that we are each just the vessels most meet for the dear Master's use, just as it seemed *good* to the potter to make us ; and that is a precious " his," in the same verse. . . . " Sheep of *his* pasture"—he does not leave us to *under* shepherds—shame to suppose that such a shepherd cannot or will not provide: that the pasture of the Lord of the whole earth can ever want verdure, or still waters ; ah, well may he add, " My people shall be *satisfied* with my goodness." I like to plead with him that he is my only shepherd, that I am wholly dependent upon him ; and I love to hear in answer, that when other shepherds do not feed, bind up, bring again, &c. &c., he undertakes to do ALL so fully, his own self.

. . . . I have only had to end each day with increasing self-loathing and dissatisfaction. I see it set down under a text which has been rivetted on my mind lately, " He must increase, but I must decrease." I feel growing so unspeakably little, every dispensation seems so beautifully prepared to pull me down in my own eyes, and in those of all of whose good opinion I have been too tenacious. Yes, my beloved children, I do

hope I am in some measure willing to *decrease* in your estimation, so that he may *increase*. I hope I would creep out of my corner in your hearts, if it might make more room for him there. I have almost an overwhelming solemn view of Isaiah ii. 11, but yet my whole new man says Amen to it ; yea, longs for it, and knows no heaven but in the accomplishment of it.

I much enjoyed the pleas at the opening of Ps. lxxiv. the *thys* and *thous*, the purchase, the inheritance, the redeemed, the dwelling-place. Oh, when the child can plead with the parent, "I am *thine*," it hardly seems necessary to add, "save me." Then, the 12th verse, calling to remembrance what he *has* done : the divided sea, the destruction of the *heads* of leviathan, that crooked serpent, with his hydra heads, and his millions of plots in each, which have all been broken by "I have prayed for thee ;" so that the enemy has been bread for us, "*meat* for the people inhabiting the wilderness." Then the dark, dreary nights, when we could see no way, and were running ourselves into thousands of dangers ; "the night is *thine* ;" all overruled for good, holding us and guiding us when we could not so much as see our precious Guide. And then the bleak, barren winter, when fruit and even leaves disappeared, and the sap was frozen up in the root ; ah, Lord, it is *thine*—a season that destroys many noxious grubs, but does not really injure the plants of thy right hand's planting ; the sap is there, and when thy summer comes, Israel shall again blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. Then the sweet figure of helplessness in a turtle dove, ~~thy~~ turtle dove ; hid in the clefts of

the rock, what archer shall wound it there? Then the grand plea of all, the covenant ordered in *all* things and sure. Can we doubt that the Lord will have respect to *that*, signed and sealed with precious blood? &c. &c.

. . . . How strangely, how wondrously are the trees transplanted in our little orchard! Well, no matter, so as they bring forth MUCH fruit. In *this* is my Father glorified. He is our soil, our hedge around us, our root, our sap, and from him is our fruit found. In him may we be rooted, and grounded in his love; *rich* soil! &c. &c. . . .

LETTER XXXIII.

1830.

It was gratifying to know that we were just talking to one another at the close and commencement of the year; and truly it should excite much praise, that with all our wanderings, dimness, sadnesses, &c. &c., our deep interest and our poor lisings were about Jesus of Nazareth, and that the uppermost cry of our heart to him was, "Abide with us." Might we not add, "for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent?" Oh, no, we might not; rather let us plead, "*The night* is far spent; *THE day* is at hand." Yes, our Jesus is the *morning* star; when he appears in our horizon it is to bring an endless day, to put an end to our *uneasy* tossings to and fro, to disperse our feverish

dreams, to cheer us with the sure prospect of that sure day, in which our sun shall no more go down. Another and yet another shade of this *far spent* night has fled, since last we walked together by the way; and oh, how sweet to me was the "*we*," in the last verse of Ps. cxv., as it enclosed my dearly loved sisters, and assured us of the same employment, to which we are trying and trying to tune up our harps day and night, while our grief and cry is, (like that well-remembered one at dear F——e,) "Two or three strings broken, and all out of tune again!" Sure and swift witnesses of the fogs and damps of the wilderness! How often, when we have just wound up one note to its right pitch, snap it goes; some stray tear has fallen on it—some sickly damp from the marshes within has spoiled the whole chord of praise. "*But we will bless the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.*"

. . . . What delicious folds we have had this year! I was particularly struck in Ps. cxvii. with a stage of Christian experience but too well known to me, "Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat." Oh, that dreadful loss of appetite, when you read, and read, and read, and don't relish a morsel, nor feed upon one crumb in your heart by faith with thanksgiving! Just strength left to cry unto the Lord, "I am sick;" but no more power to create an appetite in the *soul* than in a sick *body*. And now indeed does the poor soul appear to draw near to the gates of death, rejecting both its food and medicine. Nevertheless, the prayer of Jesus still sounds in that land, where a thousand years are as one day; and still he whom the Father heareth always is heard

on behalf of his church, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." Then bursts forth the sovereignty and the faithfulness of his God and our God. "He SENT his *word*, and *healed* them, and delivered them from *their* destructions." I should think every child of God, recovering from spiritual disease, can set his seal to this. It is the Word, the sent Word, the Word mighty through God, that heals the putrifying sores, restores tone to the enervated soul, and delivers from what is emphatically called "*their* destructions." He may indeed bring us into the wilderness, but no wilderness dispensation has power to heal, till the Lord there speak to *the heart*. Some promises, before powerless and barren, now become spirit and life. Then does the precious Comforter fulfil his covenant engagement, "I will make thy name to be remembered;" and then does the fainting soul find, that the name of Jesus is indeed as ointment poured forth.

In Ps. cvi., the 8th verse was very sweet to me, with Numbers xiv. 17—20. To have that attribute at which we naturally tremble, on our side, glorified in long-suffering, and great and forgiving mercy. But in Ps. cvii., the 29th verse I enjoyed. The wind was raised by *him*, yes, *he* raiseth the stormy wind. May we have this precious truth settled in our hearts, ere the hurry and confusion of the storm overtake us. He raiseth it—he measures it out, holding the wind in his fist. What! to destroy his children? Nay, but to fan and to cleanse. And then, when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? what storm cannot

he speak into a calm? And how much is there in the "So?" "So he brought them," &c. *How* are they brought into the haven—the dear, desired haven? Through calm seas and smooth sailing? No; it is through stormy wind and tempest; mounting up to heaven, down again to the depths; flesh and heart failing them; their own wits thoroughly at an end: SO he bringeth! I charged my heart to remember that word; but it shrinks from it. Well, no matter; he is too wise and too kind to give his cowardly child her choice. "*He bringeth*;" oh, that is very sweet; mercy, faithfulness, power, all engaged not to let me go; not *driving, bringing*, with me all the way, *himself* in the tempest-tossed vessel!

LETTER XXXIV.

1830.

. . . . As for our mercies, they are heaped up daily in such loads, that they truly reach unto the heavens, and his faithfulness unto the clouds; and there old dim-eyed nature sometimes loses sight of it, and looking only at the dark cloud, saith, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? doth his promise fail for evermore?" But though for a little moment men see not the bright light that is in the cloud, even the golden beams of "very faithfulness" emanating from the throne of God and the Lamb, and concentrating behind that very cloud; yet ere long the gale of the Spirit passes over

it, the cloud is dispersed, and the rejoicing soul claims, "O Lord God of Hosts, who is a *strong Lord* like unto thee, or to thy *faithfulness round about thee*?" Then the eye, keener than the vulture's, can see faithfulness reaching not only to the clouds, but *established* in the very *heavens*, whilst the dove's eye within the locks can sweetly rest upon it, as exhibited in the congregation of the saints.

. . . . I have been made very happy this morning with a word which was brought home to me. "They that seek the Lord understand all things." Is it not grand? I am quite sure he has taught us to seek him—that all creation would be a deadly blank, were not this our sweet, refreshing, daily employment. Then we *shall* be quite sure to understand all. I don't look so much for hard texts in the Word; on this point I do not covet knowledge so much as I ought: but hard texts—in Providence—in mysteries in covenant engagements—the quiet resting of that precious faith which doth *not* make haste—the great peace which those have, who loving the law of the Lord and having his secret with them, are not stumbled by the stones which lie in the way, not disunayed by some strange windings in the wilderness path; who can say of each tempest and cloudy day, "Oh, Jesus told me of this before it came to pass, yea, he engaged to put it in my inheritance of blessings; there is no mistake—he hath done things well." Oh, that we may so understand! "to write this over every thorn hedge, on every wall, every Kibroth-Hattaavah. At our Elims may we sweetly understand ALL; the high price

for the twelve wells of water which are opened without money and without price for us, and for the threescore and ten palm-trees, the pleasant shades of which make us so exceedingly glad. Yes, the happy soul who seeks the Lord understands why blessings come upon him, yea, follow hard after him, and often "*overtake*" him in spite of himself. He understands why creation smiles upon him, and every little flower brings its tribute of delight. The field, the city, the basket, the store, the very threshold of his door, as he passes over it in peace and safety, going out and coming in—all have a voice, and he understands *all*, as they testify, "I wot that he whom the Lord blesseth is blessed."

LETTER XXXV.

March 20th, 1830.

CAN it be that this may be the last time of directing a letter to Nige? It has just come over me with such a gleam of sunshine, for dearest M. says you are expected home in May. Of course you will not want a letter all the way home, you will have too much to occupy and delight you. Oh that word *home*! I cannot think what can be in those four honied letters; such a mellowness and quietness, a restingness; and is yours to be your own old home again? Ah! your hearts have rebuked me ere this with, "call no place home upon earth"—no, not bricks and mortar, turf and trees; but truly, the true pilgrim believer who is never at

home, is always at home. I wot that his "dwelling-place" is home, and we know that he has one that has been his, and shall be his for ever, even in all generations. I wot that that place, to which he *continually resorts*, has the charms of *home* for him; and where can he be that he has not this place of resort set wide open for him. Happy, happy children! at home in a strange land, at home in a waste howling wilderness; at home in journeyings; at home in tarryings; at home through life; and most of all at home in death!

. . . . I meant to tell you how I had been feasted upon a few words in our psalm to-day, (Ps. viii.) "Thou hast put *all* under his feet." I have been digging and digging into that precious, magnificent "*all*," and I am so struck with the simple conclusion, which the Holy Spirit seems as it were to dart upon, over the heads of sheep, oxen, fish, &c. &c. "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left **NOTHING** not put under him." Now, just to realize that simple fact; and then, though we *see* it not, - **BUT** we see Jesus, our Head, our Husband, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour! &c. . . . But I must leave off. Now I can get to the schools the days seem minutes. I really have scrambled over my paper in no time.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

S——n, June 28th, 1830.

MY beloved sisters, I do hope our psalm was very sweet to you yesterday. (Ps. xxix.) Every wave, great or small, looked so beautiful and so harmless, with the Lord sitting upon it. I thought I could never be afraid of the flood again; but probably the very next gale will find me looking at the winds and the waves, instead of looking at him who sits on them as King for ever; and then the cry of the sinking soul will be, I “perish.” But the Lord *will* give strength unto his people, and will not even reprove the fearful one, till he has removed the cause of her fears.

. F. has just told me that we are to start, if the Lord will, on Saturday week, and spend the Sunday at R——n. What a tender Shepherd to prepare such a brook for us in the way, as we go lowing along; but oh! so strait, I would not turn an inch either side. I do feel so graciously and happily anointed with a missionary spirit; so fully fed while I have my precious Bible, only too much longing to set other precious souls to dig into the wondrous mine. The Lord has shown me of late much of my exceeding vileness; yet I feel as if he were moulding me into the very new duties of the new situation and circumstances which apparently await me. Precious, precious Master! how exceedingly happy are his servants in any and every

work which they do at his bidding and under his cheering eye. I would speak it to encourage you. Be instant in season and out of season; (how often will old sluggard self tell us it is *out* of season!) I long to be *known* as the Lord's wherever I am, and whatever I am about. The ointment of the right hand *will* bewray itself; nothing so penetrating and pervading as scent. I speak feelingly now, from the invasion of the smell of paint at every crevice; but it creeps in like a little preacher upon 2 Cor. ii. 14—17. . . . Have you been praying much for me of late? I have felt almost deluged with a full flow of peace.

LETTER XXXVII.

To E. S. P.

C——n, *Nor.* 20th, 1830.

I MUST endeavour to get something in the shape of a letter for your birth-day; but my mind appears in a more than usually *rubbishy* state; and though through the mighty power of the Remembrancer my heart has not forgotten its resting-place, it feels at times more in a state of fluttering, than of quiet resting upon it; like a silly bird, longing, but hesitating, to alight upon it. Bustle is not favourable to the health of the soul, and we seem just now to have a double portion with C——n and S——n pressing upon us. Dearest R—— receives that refreshing watering which is the portion of

those who are enabled to water others. His soul does indeed prosper ; and all the accumulations of business seem but to brighten the flame of grace. *My* wicked disquietude is always about what is left undone ; and this evil spirit, offspring of unbelief, comes in the shape of an angel of light, calls itself zeal for the Lord, persuades me to let my soul go with half a meal, and with little prayer, till I am constrained to cry out, " My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me ! the treacherous dealers have dealt **VERY** treacherously." I have indeed cause to be deeply humbled for my Jehu zeal, my Nadab and Abihu fire ; and I could almost wonder that I am not again laid by on a sofa, to make me learn a little better that an Omnipotent God can accomplish his work without the services of a vile worm. But grace reigns, and loves to manifest thoughts higher than my thoughts, as the heavens are higher than the earth ; health and spirits are still lent me, and no November clouds have as yet darkened my heavens.

Nothing shows me much plainer than a letter does how full I am of self ; here is a page full about the monster, and I meant to talk to you, and to congratulate upon the decrease of your distance from home, and the sweet remembrance that you are *coming up* from the wilderness. I do believe it has been a coming up with you during the last year, and a leaning upon your Beloved with growing confidence. I can thank my God upon every remembrance of you ; and you can sing more loudly and sweetly as you soar aloft, Ps. ciii. 1, 2, while you see with increasing clearness, God, even your own God, riding upon the heaven

in your help. It has indeed been a year rich in blessings for you, blessings more marked and more humbling in that you sought them in almost any other direction than that in which they came; and, even like a sulky child, refused to hold out your hand to receive them; questioning the wisdom and the love of your own Father's heart. Now, you have seen something of the end of the Lord, and it is yours to testify that he is very *PITIFUL*, and of tender mercy; that he has dealt bountifully with you, according to his Word, and led a poor, blind, froward child in the right way; soon it will be added literally to a city of habitation, and Josh. xxi. 45, shall seal the history of your little pilgrimage.

. . . . And now I turn to your birth-day present. I rather dread commentaries. They are too much in the shape of pillows for idle heads and a prop for prayerless spirits, and would rather hinder than advance a *crying* after knowledge to him, who alone can give it to any purpose, and a *digging* for it, as for hid treasure. We are too fond of having a bit of gold laid at the top of the mine for us; it feeds our spirit of independence, and "*would be God*" apart from God; but such ill-gotten wealth seldom turns to good account, and is frequently as easily lost as it was easily obtained. . . . I would on no account dictate to you. Searle and Jazer were dishes I could keep upon my table last winter, and I certainly enjoyed them much, now and then. But *keep* to your unadulterated dish, and remember it is quite able to make you wise unto salvation. Only get the Master to break the bread for you, and assuredly you shall eat and be well filled.

.... I have but little time left, but I must say it is written in most legible characters here, as at S——n, “The Lord shall command his blessing upon thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto.” I wish you the whole Bible full of blessings. I am afraid to select one to the omission of, perhaps, a richer. I do hope you feel for us with all that lies before us this winter. If I look forward to a week, my flesh and my heart fail me. I shall indeed need to live by the day and the hour, or I shall soon knock up mind and body. The enemy will not leave the place when we do: but God, even our own God, will not leave it, and that is enough. Here is vile unbelief again, trying to put on zeal as a cloak; but it won't fit. ... Do pray that I may be kept in perfect peace—*peace, peace*, with a mind *stayed*, (nice word) on God.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.^{*}

C——n,* July 4th, 1831.

How has my heart been overflowing day after day towards you, and had you been within hearing, I almost think I should have talked away all my little stock of breath; so you see it is well we are so many miles apart. Ah! old heart! I hear your rusty comments upon that *well*. Truly, truly, it has sore longed, and does sore long, after you, to sit at your

* Written after a very severe attack of small pox.

feet, and to hear your words. I am grown so much less than the least, not *humble*, don't think that; *then*, I should be enlarged, manifestly the temple of the Holy Ghost, filled with all the fulness of God; but so shrivelled with pride, so withered with unbelief, so parched by the arrows of the Almighty, so cumbered with the load of clay to which I have so fondly clung, so heart-condemned, so unspeakably vile, so closed in with depths, so wrapped about with weeds, so under the bottoms of mountains, that I could sometimes think the earth with her bars is about me for ever. I thought to rise out of my graves so very richly laden with answers to prayer, that my peace would flow in like a river, and my righteousness like the waves of the sea. I thought to turn back, and with loud voice glorify that God, who hath dealt so wondrously with me. But I am sore distressed of late with a dumb devil. I feel for the most part as if I had no soul, no heart, no head, no tongue; all nerve, all irritation, all gloom, an easy prey to the enemy, for whom I set a chair, and spread a couch. At least, I think it is an enemy, but, perhaps, it is the voice of a faithful friend. I must tell you of what he is chiefly telling me, and then, perhaps, you will think it a friend. Can I be a child, can I be a bride, and see the door set open again and again, through which I might run into the arms of a Father and a Husband, and I stand still, nay, ask to turn about again? I preferred worms to my God, C——n to heaven; and never once said or felt, "to depart and be with Christ is far better." No, my desire was to remain in the flesh; and now, if I am his, he has given

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me my request, and sent leanness withal into my soul. Afraid of me, my children! Yes, be afraid of me, and oh, may the Lord keep you from such earth-glue, and give you more of the attractions of his love. O how would one warm ray of that love have melted all the glue, and made me flutter incessantly to flee away. But in this valley of Achor, thanks, thanks to my God! there is a door of hope; and while my walls are salvation, my gates shall be praise. Did I belong to Satan, he would rock me to sleep, but my very misery, while he is about me, shows me that my God favours me, in that the enemy doth not triumph over me. Yes, even *when* I fall, I shall arise; *when* I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me; and if I am to go thus again and again through the belly of hell, it is to bring me out at that grand portal, through which poor Jonah was brought, "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" Oh, it is a goodly gate, one pearl, but the way to it is truly awful. And are these the answers to prayers many?

.... "To make me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And bid the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part."

I will not ask, Lord, why is this? nay, I cannot, for thou thyself hast taught me to say, "Even so, Father, if so it seemed good in thy sight." I do feel very sure there is no mistake in it, and whatever the enemy means or thinks, the purpose of my Father's heart standeth for ever, the precious thoughts of it to all generations; and truly it is my infirmity, when I cannot see that his

thoughts are thoughts of peace, and not of evil. He *hath* loved me, oh, dare I doubt that? and having loved, he must love unto the end, for he changeth not. Your letter was very precious to me, and I would hope very useful; you were led to that extract for my sake.* When I would keep an open ear, aye, during the rest of my pilgrimage, to the voice of this rod, old nature trembles, and cries, like a fractious child, "Put it away, put it away;" and the voice of nature is still so loud, that it almost drowns the voice of the precious Teacher, &c.

. . . . But enough of the vile clay; no, not vile, precious clay; you are right, one touch of the potter makes it honourable for ever, the work of his hands shall not be despised. I am never so happy as when my very soul can plead, "*And now, O Lord, I am the clay, and thou the potter;*" and then, I can expect any thing, and every thing. I can be content to be clay, yet assured that God shall be glorified in me. I would not be able to lift up one atom of my poor dust, while I can see each and all in his wonder-working hands.

You ask me to tell you of some of the deep waters—I ought; and to tell you that though waters be un-

* "I verily believe the Lord hath taught you to lay your hand upon your mouth; but I shall be far from desiring you, or any other, to cast by a cross like an old useless bill, that is only for the fire: but rather would wish each cross were looked in the face seven times, and were read over and over again. It is the messenger of the Lord, and speaks something; and the man of understanding will hear the rod, and him that appointed it. Try what is the taste of the Lord's cup, and drink with God's blessing, that you may grow thereby," &c.—*Rutherford's Letters*.

fathomable, wind boisterous, and waves high, you may walk in peace and safety with him, who has them all in the hollow of his hand, and in his fist. One night and day I richly experienced this, but I experienced also, that it is, indeed, a **FRONT** of faith. It was a night and day of which you have not heard. It was the thirteenth day. In the evening of the twelfth I was so comfortable, that I got at my dear little Bible, and wanted to pick out some bursts of praise, but my heart scarcely responded to any, and nothing would it cling to but "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." I chided with it, little considering who was its teacher. I thought the day of trouble comparatively over, and that all should be praise. B—— went to bed early, and when left alone, faintness and exhaustion came on. How many anxious looks did I cast upon my watch! what weeks of hours did they seem, while the laughing, varied notes of the nightingale, sitting on a tree close to my open window, formed the only answer to my deep moans, and seemed sometimes tauntingly to say, "Ah, I have no small-pox, for I have no sin." I continued extremely ill all night, and found that not in vain had the Comforter given me that word, and caused me to hope in it. My perfect exhaustion, as I laboured for breath, spoke plainly, that if I was spared, I was to be spared in answer to that promise, which had so, in spite of myself, fastened upon my soul. It was like a golden hook let down from heaven, and I so realized the clinging to it, and so felt as if I must immediately sink, if I let go of it, that my hand

was almost fixed up as high as I could get it, in sympathy with my soul.

.... I thanked Mr. R——l for all the kindness he had shown me, and asked him what I could do, at such a moment, without a good hope; he paused, and said, "Do you feel low about yourself?" I said, "I feel happy in my soul, but I have no idea I can get through this—do you really think I can?" Mr. R——l replied, "Yes;" but it was that *long* yes which is a three-quarters *no*.... I felt ashamed of having wasted so much breath, and clinging hold again of my hook, I felt, but THIS can pull me through. I told the Lord he must undertake it all himself, and use *his* means, and thus fulfil his promise. Towards evening a peculiar sleepiness came on, such as I had had no idea of for thirteen days and nights. I don't for a moment doubt it was from the Lord, in answer to MANY prayers. Did not the Lord remember the word to his servant, on which he had so caused her to hope? It is a day to be *much* remembered.

I am grieved if I have given you any gloomy ideas of Jordan; had it been the set time for me to pass through it, I should have seen the ark and the priest in the midst, more triumphantly; but it was not THE day, except ideally, so that the strength laid up for it was not experienced. But as to the loneliness, I think we are such *herding* creatures, and live so much more upon one another than we have any idea of. Just try to realize turning away your eyes, your ears, your thoughts, your tongue, from a mother, a sister, a brother—not hearing them speak again, not speaking

to them, setting out, as it were, quite alone, not one you know to pass through Jordan with you. I speak now *nature's* voice, and truly it must be a boisterous voice, where that of grace is not heard. I *did* close my eyes on R——t as he stood with his little Bible at the bottom of my bed; I did quietly close them, and think, I have done with you. I heard F—— sobbing behind the curtain, and I did think, I have done with you. My hurried mind ran over many of you, and cried, "Done, done; I shall see man no more with the inhabitants of the earth." I turned them up, and almost as plainly as I had seen R——t, I saw Jesus, and, through rich grace, I had not a doubt at that time that he was all mine, and waiting for me. I tried to think of my vileness, but I just could not; I felt it would crush me. I said, "Lord, thou hast made me thine, and now thou must take me, unspeakably vile as I am, and make me as thou wilt, and what thou wilt." The feeling of belonging to him was more thoroughly quieting and *enough* than I can tell you. I wondered greatly how he could take me; but I did not doubt that he could and would glorify himself in me, and my heart turned with, "And now, Jesus, *thou* art indeed my *all*." And would you not expect that such a lesson has taught me to sit loose to the creature? Alas! alas! I seem to have come back to stick closer than ever, and am naughtily half pleased that you can take hold of me again with as eager a grasp; but yet, oh pray don't! I was going to say, "You would bring another heavier rod upon us;" but this is the argument of the frightened, not the loving child. . . .

You must tell all your dear people of the Lord's mercies towards me; give my sincere love to them. Tell Mrs. A—— it is a great thing to be ready to open unto him *immediately*. Pray don't think it necessary to make any comment on this letter, except on your knees, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

To E. S. P.

C——n, *November 19th, 1831.*

WHEN you said that the first letter I wrote to you would be for the dear 24th, I thought it impossible that the outbreakings of my heart towards you would be kept off paper so long, and now what appeared at such a distance, has with hasty, and unseen, and unheard strides, come close to me! How shall I greet you, my beloved child, as your God seals up the sum of these three hundred and sixty-five days, and invites you to set to your seal that God is true, yea, takes your trembling hand into his, and while your tearful eye is turned away from what he hath been to you, to look at what you have been to him, still enables you to say, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord hath spoken concerning me." Aye, but my heart wanderings! my grieving thorns! which have so often blinded me;

my pricking briars, among which I have so often been entangled! my iron-ripened neck! my earth-bound heart! what shall I say of these? Just set to your seal here, with peculiar emphasis, that God is true. He told you the Canaanite *would* dwell in the land; he has undertaken to teach you the plague of your own heart, your sickness and your sore; and when and where could you have learned these lessons, but in the bitter cup of experience? It is with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars, we must be taught that which we could not learn on a bed of roses. These are the throes and groans of a travailing creation; and shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Yet a few more pangs, and this vile body, this "body of our humiliation," shall be a glorious, a spiritual body; and as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, (and do we need proof of the truth of this?) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Hail, then, my happy child! Ah, could Gabriel speak to you, he would say with a fervour which, could envy enter his spirit, would be any thing but the fervour of complacency, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured of women, the Lord is with thee!" Behold the summary of blessedness; let me wish for you what I will, what I can, all centres in that one point, and every radius of peace, joy, safety, weal, grace, and glory emanate from that. I see the sword of the Lord sharpened, yea, furbished, that it may glitter, and at length glare conviction upon the blindfolded heart of an infidel people; that it is manufactured in no earthly armoury, that it is drawn from no human scabbard: I see it

very tempestuous around our coming God. I look with intense interest towards my precious little pilgrim; I find no room for the shadow of an anxiety; the Lord is with her, her sun, amid thickening clouds, her shield, amid thickly flying arrows; her strength, when her lips quiver, and rottenness entereth into her bones; her majestic rock, amid tumultuous waves; her glory and the lifter up of her head. I have confidence indeed, not in you, my reed, my little one, my worm, my "no might," but in the Lord touching you. I am bold in my God to hope, nay, to know assuredly, that you ARE MORE than conqueror through him that loved you. I am confident in him who can make of a reed a pillar, on which he may set a world; yea, of which he will build the eternal temple of the eternal God.

I hope I am not writing this, my children, to make you admire, with your accustomed blind partiality, sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; but I have prayed to write a word which may encourage you in the Lord our God. These are times when we need to stir up ourselves to *take hold* upon God, to realize what we are, and whose we are, and not to lie groveling as if we were only meet for plague, fire, or worms. Let us be singing our song in this day, that the Lord *hath* deliveréd us from the hand of ALL our enemies, made a present to us of the stingless serpent, of things present, and things to *come*, yea, swept the grand "*all things*" into our overflowing laps. I just begin to see a very, very little of what we *ought to be*, but my immeasurable distance from it, at times, palsies me; yet when the *Spirit* shows it to me, every nerve of the

new man is upon the stretch, and I seem to have something of the feeling of *PRESSING* towards the mark.

Perhaps it will comfort you when I tell you that the first news of the cholera in England threw a horrible dread over me, and I was compelled to pray hard against the fearfulness and trembling which came upon me. Since that, I have enjoyed great peace; not, I trust, the peace so well described by *the Record*, as the falling asleep again of one who had been roused up in a fright. I often feel as if we were all in the Liverpool steamer, just about to take leave of one another; but then it looks as if it were only for the little twinkling of an eye, while one and another dips into the waves, to enter into our Father's house, and have done with storms and waves for ever. . . .

LETTER XL.

To O. A. P.

C——n, Feb. 28th, 1832.

YOUR approaching birth-day reminds me of the days of the years of my own pilgrimage, but I cannot allow with old Jacob, as I gaze through retrospection's glass, that my days have been *few and evil*; no, no, they have been many, and very good, so filled out with mercies, that each second looks as large as a long day, so crowded with loving-kindnesses, that I have more to look over in the account of one day, than millions

have in a whole year. Nor do I recollect the birthday, since this day eighteen years,* when my heart has been so tuned to sing, as in the days of my youth, and as in the day when I came up out of the land of Egypt. Come, my children, help me to raise a peculiar Ebenezer at the close of this peculiar year. I *did* think this hand would have been where it could not celebrate his truth. I did expect this tongue would have been in the grave where it could not praise him. But he hath delivered this vile body out of the pit of corruption,* for he was *ready* to save me, and to *make* me to live. Therefore, we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments of his own creating and tuning all the days of our life in the house of the Lord: for the living, the living, he *shall* praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children *shall make known* thy *truth*. I never saw this marrow of life, this essence of joy so plainly, as when I felt to be turning my back for ever upon the busy vineyard, and leaving the honoured labourers to bear the heat and burden of the day, while I entered into rest, where the sun cannot smite, nor any heat. Never did a Lot's wife so look back upon her Sodom, as I looked back upon the whitening harvest field. It was not all love to my Master, or I could have desired to serve him day and night in his immediate presence, where I could never have grieved him again. It was not all love to poor sinners, or I could have trusted the care of them to him whose heart was running over with that, of which

* Written after recovery from the small pox.

I had but a drop. It was much of a great *I* swollen into undue importance, much of muddy, creature affection, much of a cohesion to a well-feathered nest. This, Lord, thou knowest, for thou beholdest every fold of this enfolded heart. But of thine own I will give thee. There was a something of thine own blessed mind in me, there was an impression, however faint, of that image of thy precious self; summed up in few words, but shown out in glowing characters from eternity to eternity, in lengths and breadths, and heights and depths immeasurable, "It is *more* blessed to GIVE than to *receive*."

For you, I do pray for a rich experience of this blessedness. May you realize the heart of Jesus towards you, and know how he does rest in his love towards you, and how assuredly he does rejoice over you to do you good, with his whole heart and with his whole soul; and thus drinking in of his heart and mind, may you be as a fruitful bough, running over the wall, scattering your fruit on all sides, enjoying shelter and sunshine; blest with the blessings of heaven above, and blessings of the deep that lieth under.

I am still made to hang upon that wondrous golden hook which was let down to pull me out of the very jaws of death, Psalm L. 15. I do find a growing delight in pleading with my Father, that word, upon which he did, with such a grand sovereignty of power and love, cause me to hope. I hold him, and will not let him go with "Thou *SHALT* glorify me;" and he loves to be put in remembrance. He has hewn much with his happy axe this winter, and when it

begins to boast and seek its own glory, he says, "remember the word upon which I caused thee to hope . . . thou shalt glorify *ME*, not thyself." Ah, if I have cause to put *him* in remembrance, how much more has he to put *me* in remembrance! Will you speak to the King for me? You would, if you knew all the vile shaking of the axe, if it were only from the fear of its being laid by again.

29th.—I was in an empty state of effervescence yesterday, and you got the froth; I am ashamed to send the letter, it is so full of self . . . I long to hear of you all again. So we have the pestilence between us! I open my mouth, and pant for the realization of "*whatsoever* the King did, pleased all the people." . . . What do you think for this year? that you are going to find nice, full cisterns, good strong arms to lean upon? Oh! do ye fear this *glorious* and *fearful* name, "the Lord *TRU* God." So much thine, that he will bear no rival, so wholly thine, that he gives and expects a whole heart, *rests* in his love, and will have you rest in yours. The cisterns shall be filled for you, if your souls are enabled to obey, Psalm lxii. 5, if otherwise, your pitcher shall be empty, and your souls aching. I am so happy in my work here, but I begin to fear I am doing it to the people more than to my Master. I have much to feed pride and self-complacency, but much more to feed humility and self-abbhorrence, but these creatures have a very poor appetite compared with the former. How beautiful it would be to be a fountain of gardens, a well of living water, and streams from Lebanon! It is much, unspeakably

much, to have such a desert turned into a garden; but to be the source of *other* gardens, of transforming *other* deserts, oh it is something worth living for! but could I be content to live for this in the heart of Africa, in an unfeathered nest? Oh, my heart doesn't like cross questioning.

. . . . The first taken by death from our girls' school, is one of whom we had talked for the class of merit, as likely to make a strong, excellent servant. We have every reason to hope she is now serving her God day and night. I have been looking at what we *call* death, as represented, John xiv. 3; and it just seems the consummation of every wish, the fulfilment of every desire, every word is so precious. To put "*I*" for death; then the "*will*;" the "*come*;" not going to him, but his coming to the school to fetch us home; and the "*again*," he has paid us many a visit to prepare us for the prepared home: what an "*again*" the last visit will be! and "*receive* you" when all others must give you up. But where to go? "*unto myself*;" oh the *allness* of that home! and then the precious "*that*." But I have robbed others to write so much to you, my darling child. Tender love to all your party from your most loving

LETTER XLI.

To E. S. P.

C—n, Nov. 20th, 1832.

PRIDE is very noisy, and charges me not to write to you; but, after a struggle, I have determined to wound it, rather than wound your dear feelings; and if my poor letter can but please you with a re-assurance of my love, you shall have it. I have been a little lifted up this morning by a word which was sent to me, when I was on my knees, and which, at first, I thought too good to be true. But the word is *found*, and I have eaten it. I appeared to myself too despicable to deserve the exertion of mind, almost, of being despised—quite less than nothing; and it was told me in mine ears, “Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any.” Oh the stoop in those words! the highness and the lowness—the greatness and the littleness! the majesty and the mercy! I believe I had been exercised with the conviction of how you, my fellow worms, must despise me; and my tender Father sent me this word with such a *behold*, such a power! and then as I fed upon it, he so sweetly added, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;” and I was amazed to see how often and how much I had despised some, yea many, and could but see the despiser was most to be despised, as being most unlike the Lord. I believe now I have given you this text in my own defence, and to lead you to bear with me according to Christ Jesus. And now, when we perch on this first

twig, perhaps on the tree of hope, and mount to the sitting down with Christ on *his* throne, shall we exclaim, Oh the depth? or, Oh the height? When we see him teaching his eaglet to leave the nest, built on the top of the rock—bearing it on his own wings—causing its feathers to grow—teaching it to mount upwards and build its nest on high, yea, on the very throne, shall we say, “He that is MIGHTY hath done to me great things?” or shall we say, “His *gentleness* hath made me great?” Is it not comely for us to comply with the word of exhortation spoken to us this morning, “Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice?” What hard, hard work has my wicked heart found this, since I left you; or rather, how busy have I been at cutting the strings of my lyre, taking out the pegs, aye, and almost cracking it. The fountains seemed broken up that Wednesday morning; it was really a *wrench*, as I passed the house which knew our dear, dear old friend no more; to feel that she could not weep with me, caused a pang, which in the deepest view of the selfishness of my heart, I did not previously think had lurked there; I quite looked back to the gate, to be sure whether her tearful eyes were not looking after me: Too often have I had Elijah’s grumbling fits, when called to service, with an impatient “I am not so well as my fathers;” but he has carried me on eagles’ wings, that I have only had to look down, and back, upon the mountains over whose summits he has borne me, and whose cloud-capped tops in the horizon nearly crushed me. Now I sing, “Over, over, ever!” &c.

I am longing for a letter. I trust I shall hear that your precious souls prosper and are in health; but then, I shall naughtily envy you; mine has long been as languid as my body; but better days will come. The garden of the Lord shall have its spring, its everlasting summer; its sun shall no more go down. Have you ever been afraid of asking very earnestly for a spiritual blessing, for fear of the means through which it is to come? This is too often my wretchedly wicked state, and I can tremble at the words, "I will bring them into the *wilderness*," though the very next are, "and will speak comfortably unto thee." It is a strange question, but it is a needful one, "*Wilt* thou be made whole?" The Lord make me willing to part with all, so that I may have full enjoyment of him. I dare not say that thus it is with me; I think that thus it *was* with me. How sweet, "He is *greater* than thy heart!" I roll it over, wretched thing that it is, into his dear hands.

LETTER XLII.

To O. A. P.

C——n, February 26th, 1833.

I FEAR my beloved —— would have been almost gratified to see how the heart, which will never, if it can help it, step over the threshold to *meet* a trouble, was desolated, when the unlooked-for visitor came, as one that travelleth, and turned in upon me as an armed man.

Letters were, indeed, as usual, sleep-stealers, and I ushered in the Sabbath dawn with a shamefully heavy heart. The appointed text greatly humbled me. Should such an one as I sit in darkness, when I had light in my dwelling—the light of life! Should I fret so for the apprehended extinguishing of one little taper, when the sun had arisen upon me! And is this my kindness to my Friend, to begrudge her the fulness of joy, that I might not lose the little droppings from her mingled cup here below! But we may sit, like Canute, and talk to the waves, till they surround and overwhelm us, and in contemptuous scorn seem to say, “Jesus I know, and the Comforter I know; but who are you?” We may turn to every storehouse of creature comfort, and hear each and all declare, “If the Lord do not help thee, wherein shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?” Then it that voice which is full of majesty, that voice which is upon the waters, speak but the word, what an immediate, what a wondrous calm does it produce!—But oh! the cunning devices of Satan! what attribute will he not ape? what coin will he not counterfeit? He soon stepped in as comforter, and actually prevailed upon me to take a good draught of that from which my God was weaning me; and of what think you, had I been drinking? nothing higher, nothing safer than just all of you close round me in May, &c.

And now, having, as usual, put self in the foreground, let me turn to that which must call forth my liveliest gratitude. Year after year has my heart been filled with peace and joy, as I have gazed by faith on

that mighty angel of the covenant who has gone before you, and *kept* you in the way, and brought you thus far to the place which he hath prepared for you. I have been looking with a trembling joy to the parental engagement so beautifully set forth, Exod. xxiii. 20—22. I do see, and in some measure know, that he will not have a spoiled child in his train. I find the family rod provided for stubborn, fretful, wayward children; for, “He will *not* pardon your transgressions,” is spoken, I conceive, to an Israel, in whom, in one sense, he cannot see perverseness or iniquity, to whom, as to a David, recking in abomination, he ever says, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin.” But as “a father, the son in whom he delighteth,” there shall be the *nevertheless* of fatherly correction, the *nicety* of chastisement upon the very spot of sin, so that his beloved shall see and hate what he hates, and be holy even as he is holy. And would his children have this rod burned? I trow not, though oft with tearful eye and failing heart they cry, “O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.” O that he may hold your spirit by his, and keep you from provoking him by questioning about the way, fearing to follow where he leads, or turning aside to the right hand or the left. May you *indeed* obey his voice; so shall you make your way prosperous, and so shall you have good success, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

TO THE SAME.

March 14th, 1833.

I HAVE been sitting with the pen in my hand till I am ashamed to waste any more time. Heart and mind are at times so deluged, they appear lost in many waters, yet this ought not so to be with those who can say, "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." We ought to congratulate one another upon the ingathering of such blessed, ripe fruit. I have seen her so welcomed as it were by our blessed Father, such an accession, if possible, to his unspeakable joys. I have, for some happy minutes, forgotten every sorrow, while delighting myself in their joy. Richest promises seem to have over-run their banks towards our peculiarly favoured family. It has not been with us one of a city, and *two* of a family, brought to Zion; *that* were an unmeasured favour; but more than two already gathered in, and many twos now following after. We seem bound to the service of our God by a tenfold cord; may we feel its constraining power more and more. *Don't* you feel a peculiar glow of love and gratitude to him, who hath dealt so bountifully with our blessed sister? I was thinking how we should love her dear husband, and be ready to kiss the very arms she died in; and then it struck me—O that Husband that *went with her quite* through Jordan! that nurse who made her bed so smooth! that Com-

forter who held in every angry wave! what, what shall we render!

I find the effect of sorrow upon *nature* is to make it sulky, morose, reserved; not bearing to be looked at, or spoken to. *Grace* flies into the arms of the chastening parent, sobs upon his loving bosom, and cries, "My Father, make me a better child, keep me nearer, and let all come and find what I find in thee."

But you must be ready to say, "Miserable comforters are ye all." There is but one letter which contains sure and full consolation. Accept the tender love of your own—no, *not* your own.

LETTER XLIV.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

April 11th, 1833.

I BELIEVE you give me credit for waiting as patiently as any one for letters, my beloved sisters, but I certainly began to think the time rather long, at least I believe my heart trembled for its little May nest, and expected it was going to be blown down. Yet I hope I do not sinfully count upon it. I feel by anticipation the *thorns*, as well as the wool. It does not much matter how many or how few rush-lights we have, so as we enjoy *sun-light*; but oh the anxieties of watching over waning rush-lights in a dark, long night! How quickly are some in the socket, while we are fondly gazing

upon them, and expecting many an hour's light from them—a wilderness wind blows out another, and while we turn to screen a second with our poor clay hand, a third disappears! And now, the poor wearied, disappointed soul turns and waits for sun-light—yea, watches and looks more than they that watch for the morning. The sun ariseth, the outgoings of the morning praise him who has caused the day-spring to know his appointed place. The soul has now really learned something of a lesson, which it had put away as its first worn book, known by rote long ago, “*The Lord is my light.*” Loads of useless cares and anxieties now flee away, as morning clouds before the rising sun; and “he shall not *much* remember the days of his life, because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.” May it be thus with us, by beloved sisters. My judgment is driven into the truth of it, but the old heart is a long way behind, limping and groaning, as if it would never overtake this simple truth. But what has made me talk about this? Oh, the dear thought of seeing you all; but I have a wish nearer and dearer to my heart than that, and upon this my infinitely wise Father keeps a pretty steady cross. To be at work in the vineyard appears to me such an unspeakable joy, that set what I will beside it, it looks quite foolish. Yes, precious loves, even a coze with you has no joy, in comparison of the joy that excelleth, that of being employed in inviting the beloved, purchased ones to come unto him, who is the *rest* and the refreshing. The time appears so *very, very* short for this work, and the work so very, very glorious, that I would rather far be engaged in it,

than to stand talking with the nearest and dearest fellow labourer. I am aware there may be much of Jehu in this driving, and I believe it is Jehu that my Father is flinging out of me now; at least I do pray that he would take away all that offends him, in whatever shape it has crept in; and oh that I might but be a vessel meet for my dear Master's use! I sometimes think I have quite tired him out, and that he can use me no more, while I carry out the abomination of this man of sin. But, blessed be his dear name! if he is tired of me, he does not let me be tired of him, and that is such an hourly miracle of mercy, that it may well fill up every second with praise, had I nothing else to praise for.

I trust you are enabled to talk and think of our dear blessed sister, as one just stepped over the threshold of our Father's house before us—still *one* with us—*one* family, but taken into the drawing-room. How often I used to tell her she was not made for the wilderness, when she used to set off with us in one of our village excursions, looking so unfit for it—how bright her setting sun! *Force* yourselves to speak of her to *others*. I believe we may make a little god of our grief, and that *silent* homage is the most dangerous of all. I am apt to keep such an immense circle round it in the presence of others, and to say to every subject that comes up, "Draw not nigh hither—the place is holy ground." Thus have I made groves and high places for my former deep, deep wound, till the very name of the beloved one sounded like cruel sacrilege.

Perhaps this would be all Hebrew to some, but it is my sin, and if you are guilty, fight against it—speak not only *one to another* of her—there, thought rests on thought, and feeling on feeling, in mutual, soft repose; but try to accustom yourselves to speak and hear of her, wherever you may be. I am quite sure it is better to do so—it relieves the spiritual lungs of much evil, instead of choking it all up, &c.

LETTER XLV.

To O. A. P.

C——n, June 13th, 1833.

I CANNOT refrain from catching at a few minutes, to try and talk to you on paper, as I can in no other way at present. I greatly feel the separation, albeit greatly pleased that you are where you are, counting it all joy and honour put upon you, inasmuch as you are as one that serveth. Oh how little have I of the spirit of my Master! How little do I covet what he counts greatness, while I even fly off to its antipodes in search of it. "I am among you as he that ~~serveth~~." He shows me a wondrous glow of loveliness over these words just now, but I find a strong, though disallowed, shrinking from that which may conform me more to my precious Head. Yet I could hope the desire to have more of this mind is strengthen-

ing, and the wild ass not quite so unmanageable, nor the bullock quite so restive. . . .

22d.—Little, little did I think, when I began this sheet, wherefore my infallible Teacher caused that text (Luke xxii. 27.) to shine out with such a light and loveliness. He was working in me mightily for such a week of servitude as I never had before; such honours in store, and made to appear such honours, as a test of my resemblance to my beloved Master. . . . But I must sing of mercy as well as judgment; indeed, if we hold our peace, what might not cry out! Oh what days, and hours, and minutes, have we been carried through, and found, when he giveth quietness, the foaming waves must just “pass by;” the conquered deep feeling itself in his hand, may utter its voice, but it is the voice of subjection to its Maker, while it lifts up its hands on high, in token of adoration and subjection to its glorious Ruler. Our precious brother is just in that state which appears to me most profitable and most God-glorifying in the furnace; without the slightest reserve enabled to say, “He *doeth* all things well;” acknowledging the needs be for the bitter draught; turning to him that smiteth him, with the contrite sob, and the full filial confidence. . . . But others have given all particulars of our loved sister’s end. How sweet to her among the *little* sweets must be the word, “*no more pain.*” She had such a peculiar dread of it, and though at last it was *very intense*, how shortly over! While staying here, one of the last things for which she reproved them all was, “you spend too much time in talking about

plans." I did not hear it, but I hope we shall all remember it. I long to live for the day, quite up to the collar, and leave to-morrow till it is to-day. Weep not, my precious child. "*The Lord liveth; and blessed be our Rock;*" that shadow will endure, when the leafy shade of every gourd is gone. . . .

LETTER XLVI.

To E. S. P.

November, 1833.

You will expect to hear from me, and the fear of disappointing you compels me to write, though of nothing that is good and lovely can I say more truly than of a letter, "*It is not in me.*" I have nothing to draw with from the only well which contains living water, how then can I give water to one of my Master's flock, but as he, in his sovereign power and love, is pleased to fill my vessel? Thus, when I have sat down, as dry as any old cracked cistern could be, a stream has flowed forth, I knew not whence or whither; but I have heard of its refreshing some dear soul, yea, my own has sipped and been refreshed, as it flowed from me. Again, when I have pumped hard with head, and heart, and hand, only a few muddy drops could I get, smelling and tasting of earth, carthy; just testifying of all the works done under the sun, that they are brim full of labour, a sore

travail, and ~~after~~ all, vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh for works ~~done~~ *above* the sun, before ever the sun was, works to which God hath created us in Christ Jesus, and ordained that we should walk in them. In *these* works we can indeed rest and be refreshed; these will stand, these will be to the praise of the glory of his grace; whether it be the giving a cup of cold water, or the laying down of the life. Of this busy rest we may say for ever, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." And now, may I ask, is it well with thee? Has thy *Ishi* more, and has Baali less of thy heart? Have you more satisfying union with Jesus as your very own, and your "enough?" Do you draw near to him with a more affectionate and unhesitating plea, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh," one whom thou hast engaged to cherish and nourish as thine own self? Is there no shyness between you? Nothing that you would rather not tell him all about? Alas, these are questions from which my own soul would too often shrink; but it is far better to argue them fairly out, and bring forth these kings from their caves, for our Joshua to set his feet upon them. Oh, his faithful, unchanging love! how crushing it is! how wondrous, that even when Saul was king over us by our own choice and appointment, our David was he who led out and brought in poor, foolish Israel! How blessed that determination of our most patient Teacher, as concerns his most stupid scholars, "My people SHALL know my name"—written out, as it is, in capital letters, upon every blade of grass, upon

every hair of our heads; beaming in every eye in the wheel of providence, engraven in characters not to be misunderstood and never to be effaced, in the very Rock of ages, summed up in four little letters; yet where can we find that well taught soul who can read it at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, without any hesitation or any misgiving? Happy is it for us, that he who speaks and it is done, hath spoken this good word concerning us; and though we may often now con our little, tiny lesson in much weariness and painfulness, though to our tear-dimmed eyes every letter may be strange and displaced, though an enemy whispers, *this spells any thing but LOVE*; yet the word of our God standeth sure, "my people *shall* know my name." Oh my child, when we really do perfectly know it, how ashamed shall we be of our years of dulness, how astonished at the long patience of our Teacher; what a heaven shall we find in the very name of one, of whom we may say, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Surely the lovely letters have shone out very resplendently towards our family during the last year. To see in the Lord's gathering together of his few, his "men of number," another and another of our large family brought into his family; to receive such manifest answers to prayer, as make the very trees of the wood sing out and declare with no stammering tongue, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Surely we may, we must say, "Herein is love." My cup has most peculiarly run over, and if you had nothing else to praise for, I know my mercies are your mercies, and

my rejoicing is your rejoicing. The Lord bless thee more and more, and glorify you by enabling you to glorify him.

LETTER XLVII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Nov. 23rd, 1833.

I GRIEVE that I could not write to you yesterday, but Saturday is my only at all quiet morning, and now I have such a bad headache, I am only fit for bed: but I would not that you should suspect a diminution of my motherly love and care.

I have been so pleased this morning with looking at the contrast between Moses and that precious Joshua who has undertaken to bring us into Canaan, in that Moses was so soon weary of his troublesome burden, while Jesus fainteth not, neither is weary; and whereas Moses could plead, as a reason for casting off the burden, "Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them?" Jesus will gladly acknowledge them as the travail of his soul, and cheerfully receive the charge; "Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child;" and never, never shall this mighty One, upon whom help is laid, be heard to say, "I am not able to bear all this people, because it is too heavy for me." No; though he stooped so very, very low to get

fairly under his burden; now that he has taken it upon him, how gloriously does he mount up as an eagle, and how safely does he bring his treasure "to himself," even now making them sit together with him in heavenly places, more than conquerors! Beggared language and beggared figures can only talk of a "nursing Father," experience testifies that he hath a name even above this name—a reality even beyond this figure—uniting all the strength and the wisdom of the Father with the tenderest love, support, and comfort found by the poor babe only in the weaker vessel. How delightful, my loved child, at the close of another year, to contemplate him who still bears you unwearied between his shoulders, yea, bears all your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife, your restlessness, your tremblings, your fractiousness, your strugglings, your insensibility, your foolishness, your ingratitude, your coldness, your deadness—bears all without one shadow of turning in his tenderly loving heart, without one moment's variableness in his thoughts of peace towards you. I sometimes wonder more at the love which keeps me, than at that which first took me up; but this is my foolishness, for it is all one. When he first said unto me, *Arise*, and took such wondrous pains with the poor outcast, he well knew that I should deal very treacherously, that I should thoroughly tire out any thing short of everlasting love; but he knew also that having loved his own which were in the world, he should and would love them unto the end.

I trust this has been a good year with you. Perhaps you ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~resting~~ ^{resting} upon some Kibroth-hattaavah. It is

well; it makes the flesh tremble; but by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of the Spirit. So does the Lord recover us out of what would have been graves for the soul, and makes us to live indeed. When we get our mouths filled with flesh, we may soon expect our souls to be filled with sorrow. The Lord keep us from lusting exceedingly after any created good, and thoroughly fill us with his own glorious Self!

LETTER XLVIII.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

C——n, Dec. 31st, 1833.

I SEEM to want a little bit of talk with you once more this year, my loved children—one, I think, I have not even had a peep at all the year. Do I occupy the same niches and corners of her heart which I before-time occupied? It shall be no grief to me to see them filled with gold instead of dust. May the Almighty be your gold, and then thou shalt have silver of strength. May you prize only the gold that cometh from him; then thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways. When others are cast down, then thou shalt say, "There is lifting up." Wherefore? Because the Lord is thy treasure, and they

who possess him possess substance, and not shadows. The Lord is thy gold, therefore thy riches are unsearchable. Thy portion is secure, laid up where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. When he has given you himself, don't be so affronting as to ask, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" I have thought that those two verses must be put together, to give us a little specimen of the creature man, like a pettish child, throwing away the most costly of presents, because it wants some straw; and setting light by his Father, and all that he can bestow, if one bauble is withheld.

. . . . I am often sinfully cumbered about much serving; but few can imagine the glowing interest and the deep responsibility I feel for this beautiful flock. . . . The idea of leaving one unwarned, undirected, unhealed, unattended, is like the sharpest spur in my side hourly; and what I have felt once or twice, when the bell has tolled for one, for whom I have not done what I could, has preached sermons to every inch of my naturally indolent flesh. Never, I think, did I close a year with such quietness and confidence of spirit, such peace of mind, such freedom from care, such a cheering sense of the love of my Beloved. A chequered year, indeed, it has been, and it began with a tremendous storm; but the waves have owned their Maker's voice, and that Maker is my husband. He has had a special favour to our parterre this year, and gathered several lilies. I see them in his precious bosom, and shall I begrudge him his nosegay? But oh, the mercy that I do not know whom he has set his

eyes upon, to be next gathered! May he teach us thoroughly to live to-day, and to leave to-morrow. My nest is, indeed, well-feathered, and I have scarcely felt the thorn which the hand of love has entwined in it. One, however, I know there must be, and the closer I nestle, the sooner I shall feel it. Those, of course, feel it least, who sit lowest, or stand on the edge of their nest, pluming their wings for flight. I seem embosomed in love, cradled in kindness, overflowing with abundance, having all the comforts, and none of the cares of life. Through rich mercy I have been for some time strong to labour, and have had strength proportioned to each day.

LETTER XLIX.

To O. A. P.

C—n, Feb. 26th, 1834.

My heart hath talked much of thee, and now it leaps for joy to welcome thee at the end of another little stage of thy little journey; a stage of hills and dales, roughs and smooths, but all, all, all in the way to thy Father's house; all in the way to meet thy Bridegroom; all up from the wilderness, all onwards to the fulness of joy, the joy of thy Lord. How delightful it is to have "a jealous God!" I know not any thing that marks the pulse of love so much as jealousy. It implies such a deep interest in the object

beloved, such an extreme watchfulness over every action and look, such a complacency and satisfaction in the whole, that you have not a bit of it to spare for another; such an appropriation of it, that you have no rest over any inch of the heart over which you cannot say, It is mine. And this, this is the heart of our God towards us worms, whose love you could scarcely suppose he could miss, were it all gone, and that for ever. This is the meaning of all the immense pains he is taking to knock away prop after prop, to clear away all the creeping, encroaching eglantine that would smother us; to prune and purge, and refine and prove; this is all the fruit, just to get our whole heart to rest upon the only rest, the only refreshing, and just that he may also rest in his love with singing, undisturbed by the roes and by the hinds of the field.

For twenty years now he has enabled me, in some measure, to discern his lovely, loving hand at this work, though at times my eyes have been so very full of sinful tears, that I have "seen the shadow of the mountains as if they were men," instead of gazing with delight at him who, like a roe, or a young hart, was leaping over another and another "mountain of division," coming quickly to the dearly beloved of his soul. And will he not make our feet also like hinds' feet? Yes, blessed be his dear name! he **MAKETH** my feet like hinds'—he "*equalleth* them" for every precipice, every ascent, every leap, and now, even now, he setteth me upon my high places together with Christ Jesus. I dare not *wrong* your God by feeling any thing like uneasiness or anxiety about you; I have such joy and confidence

in my God concerning you, that I actually have not room in my heart or mind to ask him any whys or wherefores concerning you. Having formed you for himself, you *shall* show forth his praise, so that when I cannot understand what he is about, I cannot in any wise dispute the point, or answer him again. This I pray may be the state of my happy child, and it can flow only out of the bosom upon which we are privileged to lean, and to that source be all the praise. Sometimes we may, indeed, like the disciple whom Jesus loved, raise the inquiring, it may be, the tearful eye ; but we see a Father's, a Husband's countenance, and the heaving heart is quieted, the peaceful child lays her head down again, and so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Februdry 27th.—So far only could I get yesterday ; I sometimes feel almost a *crushing* responsibility is committed to my charge. At times I would shake off this feeling, and charge it home upon pride and self-sufficiency ; then again, the spirit seems to cry, " Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God ;" and Ezek. iii. 18, tolls through every chamber of my soul. One or two have been taken away lately in their iniquity, to whom, indeed, I had spoken, but alas, in a half-hearted manner, not as a dying creature to dying creatures, not with the energy of, " *TO-DAY* if ye will hear his voice," not with the authoritative, unflinching message of my Master, " Thou shalt surely die !" What a knell was their tolling bell to me ! truly a burden too heavy for me. I was fain to roll it as quickly as possible upon my Daysman, or my mind would have been crushed.

that her God calleth the things that are not as though they were, that even now he rests in his love and pronounces her all fair, without spot. Let her cultivate this blessed assurance of hope, and while she sees her Bridegroom delighting in her, how diligently will she labour to cleanse herself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, to put on her beautiful ornaments, and to please her adorable Ishi. The cold, formal name of Baali shall be taken out of her mouth; she shall walk lovingly as a bride, royally as a queen. I conceive that this is a something of the life of faith, a something now and then acknowledged in the head, tremblingly caught at for a little moment in the heart, constantly fought against by the father of lies; by man, called presumption, by God, called faith, or just believing that truth cannot lie. O that all our abominable gainsayings may be knocked down by the gentle but cutting reproof, "How is it that ye do not believe?"

This time seven years ago, our God stirred up my first earthly nest, my double birth-place; he told me he would settle me after my old estates, and do better to me than at my beginnings, but through much sorrow I caught but a word or two, and hardly gave them a place. I can now set to my seal that God is true. He hath dealt wondrously with me, and I would hope has placed me on a loftier bough, nearer my last nest, while he every now and then stirs me up, exercises my little pinions, and commissions the whistling wind and falling leaves to whisper to his little nestler, "This is not your rest, because it is polluted." Blessed, blessed

reason, why it is not, cannot be, may not be, our rest; a reason to which every whit of the temple re-echoes, while it groans with the traffickers within, and the enemies without, and full of fightings and fears, cries, "I would not live alway."

.... Beloved sisters, I don't wonder you want to hear about us. The petition is sent in to the king with a goodly number of signatures; it is presented by the king's son, who is sure to obtain whatever he asks for; and being drawn up according to the will of the king, we are confident that we *have* the petition we desired of him. But the king loves to heap on additional favours of his royal bounty, *according to the hand of King Solomon*, and he will exercise and strengthen many languishing graces, and call forth many dormant ones, as well as grant us the request of our lips. He will so answer us, that the very beasts of the field shall honour him, yea, the dragons and the owls; whilst his dear children shall see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that the Holy One of Israel hath created it. Oh it is a mercy worth waiting for that comes so clustered with mercies! Through mercy, I do feel very sure that the promise is *true*; but through unbelief, I do sometimes think the time is long. For some little moments I feel full of misgivings and anxieties, but blessed be my God, they are few and far between; and connected more with the weakness of ~~my~~ outer man, than with the inner man, which is fondled in the arms of everlasting love, almighty power, and infinite wisdom, till it forgets that it can have a care or

a fear. Indeed, as to the final issue, the calling in of *each blood bought* soul in this place, it is a libel upon the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping Father, upon the preciousness of the blood of redemption, upon the omnipotence of God the Holy Ghost, to doubt for a moment that all is safe, right, and well ordered in ALL things. I think I may truly say, when I tremble, it is at the overflowings of my own corruptions, the out-breakings of my own vileness, the gigantic struggles of the old Adam, who finds so much to invigorate and rouse him. I find a fire breaking out here and there, and am often puzzled to discover whether it is kindled by a live coal from the precious altar, or whether it is set on fire of hell. Sisters, need I say, pray for us? and may I not add, praise for us?

The Lord bless you abundantly, and break the bread to you, and cause you to feed upon his word, giving you such a meal that you may be satisfied with his goodness. My time is quite gone, but my *love*—oh, it has no end! blessed be our God! who hath thus taught us to love one another.

LETTER LI.

To O. A. P.

C—n, Feb. 29th, 1836.

JUST as I was mending my pen this morning for a little writing, I did sweetly realize, as this pen is in my hand, so am I in my Lord's hand, to make,

to mend, to use; I may truly add as little as the poor quill knows what is to flow from it, so little have I known what was to flow from my mind, and to the praise of the ready writer I speak it, I have often been amazed and refreshed with what was all new and sweet to me as I wrote it. Remember this, my children, who have made too much of the pen; and while these birth-day letters, in heaps, tell you that the writer must be worn nearly to the stump, do believe that whatever of good or useful it has been the means of imparting to you, just flowed from him, who filleth *all* IN ALL—from him, who will soon have done with all pens, and even golden pipes, and will impart his own all-precious self without any medium to your well filled souls. Oh, when shall the wide gaping earth “be filled by knowing the glory of the Lord!” Every parched place, every unsatisfied desire, every yawning deep and unfilled chasm cry, “Come, Lord Jesus.” Jezreel’s moan runs through a worn-out, faded creation, and, “*I will hear,*” is the gracious response of him, who is now, even now, leaping over every mountain of Bether, like a roe or a young hart; of him, who will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing of which he hath spoken to us. Do we cry, “come?” it is but the faint echo of his yearning cry, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me.” Do our hearts burn with desires after him whom not having seen we love? it is but the reflected warmth of that heart which has delighted in us before the highest parts of the dust of the earth were laid; which has followed our way-

every trackless path; which has
~~not suffered him to take his eyes off us one moment,~~
even that eye which looked nothing but love, when
no other eye pitied us. I know not how it is with
you, my Ruhmah, but my great fight of faith is
generally to keep hold on this one immense truth,
"his desire is towards me;" and I am the more con-
vinced of its importance from the dreadful struggle
the enemy is continually making to wrest it from me.
How unearthly, how bride-like, how dignified, how
one-hearted, would the walking in this truth make us!
How would it cure us of creature hankering, comfort-
hankering pursuits! What a flood of satisfaction flows
in, even with a momentary lively apprehension of this
truth. With what an assurance can we call all things
ours, when we thus look at our bridegroom, and
know the thoughts that he thinks towards us; the
real rest and delight he takes in his Bride; the joy it
is to him to give her a goodly portion. Oh the cruel
unkindness of our suspicious hearts! that he should
question our love to him is in no wise strange; but
that we can ever harbour a doubt of his desire towards
us, this is strange indeed: this goes very near his
heart, and this, during his visible sojourn among his
loved ones, frequently called forth the "*how is it,*"
and the "*why,*" of the meek, but steadfast lover of souls,
who was at the very time writing out in characters of
blood, which might be read by all worlds, the GREAT
love wherewith he loved us. What a happy study will
this be for an uninterrupted eternity! Here, when we
think we have got on a little in the sweet lesson, one

little cloud comes, and is enough to blot it all out, and leave us as though we had never known a letter of it. I, who can write of it now, and in some small degree realize it; may to-morrow be grieving his loving heart, by questioning if it be really so; needing line upon line, promise upon promise, with a bright sunshiny day, to enable me to make out one word of a lesson, of which I thought I knew a good deal two and twenty years since! How long have you been at school, my precious child? Do you think you have got on in this lesson the last year? Now I see an enemy peeping over your shoulder, and whispering, "Oh, no, not at all;" and as he steps back, he says in a modest voice, "I am Mr. Humble Mind." Tell him Liar is his name, and liar is his nature, and when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, and that he just came now to put down every rising note of praise in your heart, and to quench the kindling fire of love. May you be enabled increasingly to live upon the truth, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his;" and may you increasingly find it thus every coming day of your pilgrimage, a quickening spur, a refreshing rest, a soul-satisfying portion, a desire-quickenng stimulus, a pillow on every stormy sea, a call in every treacherous calm, a dark mantle over earth's vanities, an alluring glory over heaven's realities. Thus shall thy Brother and thy Husband be unto thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee and with all other, and an opening of the eyes, to behold the centre of all loveliness and all love, the desire of all desires, the overflowing Filler of every void. . . .

.... How cold the weather continues! how surprising that the birds do not make an excuse of it to defer their songs a little! All things but man serve him with an elasticity, and punctuality, and straightforwardness; the hitch and the crookedness is all in the one great wheel, man; but soon the Master's hand shall set that right, and then, when is fulfilled "*His servants shall serve him*," what a master-piece will be brought forth! what a testimony shall be borne by all the world, "Behold, it is **VERY** good!" I am pressed out of measure to-day for time.

LETTER LII.

To E. S. P.

C——n, Nov. 21st, 1836.

I WAS almost tempted to think that I would not again disappoint you, and manifest my emptiness, by another birth-day letter; when I was led to observe that which had previously entirely escaped my notice, that God, even our own God, observes birth-days, and especially comes down to talk with his dear ones on that day. I opened, at the moment, on Gen. xvii. and found in this, as in every thing else, that if we closely study our Exemplar, we may find the precious print of his perfect steps marking out every inch of our walk through this great wilderness. While I see my God

thus coming to his child, to cheer and instruct him, on his birth-day, while I remember that he will be the same on the 24th of November, 1836, that he was the day that Abram was ninety years old and nine ; while I know he is no respecter of persons in his beloved family, but that my E——y is as fondly cherished by him as was old Abram ; I would fain follow the Lamb into your room, yea, into your very heart, and speak comfortably to you, and echo his gracious words of exhortation, becoming in this, as I ought to be in every thing, an “ imitator of God.”

But now, I would rather talk to myself than to you, while I look at the cup of consolation filled with his opening address, “ I am the Almighty God.” I fear to dilute the rich wine, which none but Jesus can tread out, which nothing but his precious veins could yield ; and even he has, on more than one occasion, left *I am*, with a blank, as if every language stood bankrupt before it ; as if time at its longest stretch was too strait to utter it ; as if all worlds could only in breathless silence express it. And yet, we, even we, are the beings who shall know most about it, shall lisp it most correctly, while principalities and powers shall press around to hear and know by the church something of that name which is truly above every name. Dearest E., do you not find day by day, I had almost said, hour by hour, you are learning to lisp it a little more plainly ? Do not your hourly flittings tell whither you would fly, but for the Almightyness of that hand, which holds you in, and restoreth your soul ? Do not every moment's undeserved mercies show you another letter of his glo-

rious name? Does not this very birth-day proclaim, that it is only because you have obtained help of an Almighty, that you continue unto this day? Does not the filling up of many a craving void, the exchange of that which is not for that which is, bespeak also your *all-sufficient* God? Oh, that your happy heart may unhesitatingly answer him when he thus talks with you. *It is enough.* But now, he will put his loved child in the way of walking safely and comfortably through the coming year, and what is the solemn and exhilarating precept? "*Walk before me.*" Don't you almost see the loving Father, with his eye every moment upon the dear little creature as it moves onward, cheered with the sweet assurance that the father is close behind? Do you not see the father ready to correct the first wandering step, and to uphold the first feeble one? Do you not see, upon the least alarm, how the child turns his anxious eye, to make sure that the father is close behind, and gathering fresh confidence from the love and wisdom beaming in the father's countenance, presses forward again. But there is something solemnizing, as well as cheering in the command. If but a poor fellow worm is behind us watching our every step, it makes us go rather warily, and would be a check upon the needless loiter, the senseless haste, or the unnecessary turning to the right hand or to the left. What is it, then, to walk before him, who can find folly even in the angels, and impurity in the very heavens; who understands our thought afar off, and actually winnows our path! Still, it is our *Father*, and it is our joy and consolation to know that he is acquainted with

ALL our ways ; holy and pure as he is, I would rather walk before him than before the most partial friend I have, for he knoweth my frame ; all my desire is before him ; and, thanks to his wisdom and his love, he puts no trust in me, so that I cannot disappoint him, I cannot deceive him, and I cannot be left of him for one moment. Oh, the horror that would overwhelm me, if he told me he meant to trust me for one moment, or to leave me to take one step by myself ! But this is not the manner of our God, therefore walk before him with joyfulness and gladness of heart ; and while he is your glorious reward, he will also be your forerunner, trying every step, ere he suffer you to set your foot upon it ; and when he ceases to come down to talk with you on your birth-days, it will only be to take you up to talk with him, and to praise him for the wisdom, love, and power, with which he has guided, cheered, and protected you through this waste howling wilderness. I hope to be much in prayer for you on the 24th.

LETTER LIII.

To O. A. P.

C——n, February 16th, 1837.

I WAS hardly aware with how eager a grasp I held you, till the idea of having you wrested from me was forced upon my affrighted heart ; and truly it has come with a " Turn again, son of man ; thou shalt see greater

abominations than these." Ah, what abominations!—ignorance disputing with unerring wisdom; blindness questioning perfect omniscience; a thing of nought contending with omnipotence! So wayward was I, that I scarcely dared to open his counsels of peace, lest I should meet with some word that might militate against what my proud heart had drawn out as the only plan for restoring peace to my mind. My portion on Monday night was to be in the Song of Songs. I did not exactly remember which chapter, till I opened the Bible; but the only feeling with which I opened it, was, "I only hope it is not that about gathering lilies." To my dismay *the* very portion was, "Whither is thy Beloved gone?" &c. My heart did indeed melt like wax; still there was such a wondrous gentleness in the accents; such a most lovely representation of what we call death; such an enchanting view of our Beloved, of his visits to his garden, and of his employments there, that for a moment night was light about me. I could almost bid him welcome to his garden, and smile to see him crop one of my most cherished flowers, to place it in the bosom of love, far away from every wilderness, blight, and storm, and scorching ray. But quickly I was like a child, who cries to have returned that which, but a minute before, he appeared cheerfully to give away.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, February 28th, 1837.

"THOU drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not!" Could any precious text have more faithfully recorded what passed between the Father of mercies and the veriest of sinners, three and twenty years since! I started and blushed, when I saw the text for the day, as if conscious that all the world had been let into the secret, and were now publishing it abroad. But wherefore start and blush at the very idea of being thus marked and pointed at? Hush, guilty pride, and bold-faced shame, and dawn, thou day of wonders, when I shall delight to have that which was spoken in the ear in closets proclaimed upon the house-tops. When I shall glory in the exhibition of that thick darkness which was chased by the light of life; of that deep-stained filthiness, which has been thoroughly purged; of those iron sinews, which have been snapped asunder; of that rocky heart, which has been broken in pieces; of that wayward will, which has been brought into captivity; of that dunghill worm, which has been made to inherit a throne of glory. Yea, the secret transactions of my life and heart, if all were made manifest, shall be no grief of heart to me, for while they would exhibit the most loathsome and the most stubborn of sinners, they would display in glowing colours that Friend, whose love is so strong, whose

patience is so long, whose heart is so very pitiful, whose mercies are so very tender. Yes, even now, I could love that all the world should know what he was, specially, that day when he drew so near; when like a torrent of love he flowed in upon my soul, and so quickly filled the craving vacuum, which I would fain have filled with any rubbish, to the exclusion of my God. Oh how wondrously did his bowels yearn over me! how READY was he to help me! Had he stood aloof these twenty-three years, and now just begun to take one step towards me, it were love unspeakable—but it was *in the day*, the very day, he drew near, so near, that every crack in the thirsty earth was well filled, and the parched wilderness became pools of water. And did he not immediately hush the storm, and create a great calm, while he gently, but powerfully whispered the two words which, perhaps, of all others, my tempest-tossed heart most needed, “Fear not.”

Forgive my burst over my text, and the selfishness which has swallowed up your dear birth-day in mine. I am afraid it is generally so in your birth-day letters, as I have to write on the (*to me*) ever memorable 28th February. And yet I think I never anticipated yours with, what may I say? perhaps it is too much like, “Ah, we have got you still;” for yet a few days back, and the mention of the 3d of March pierced my inmost heart, and oh! such a thought of gloominess overshadowed it! Yes, my beloved child, we have you still amongst us, but oh, with what fresh, what solemn injunctions, from him who has yielded to our importunate cries, and granted us a little longer loan of you.

How has he renewed, for our learning, the almost effaced characters inscribed upon you, "Possess, as though you possessed not!" How has he written afresh from top to toe, "All flesh is grass!" I find myself promising not to forget it, if he will only let me keep the grass; but how then is the solemn lesson to be brought into practical use? Lord God, thou knowest, thou knowest thy servant, and this, through grace, we know, no day of life's little pilgrimage can come with any load, but thou hast weighed the mountains in scales, and prepared strength according to the day; yea, after thine own heart, Lord, good measure, pressed down, and running over. For you it is "all joy," whether you go or stay. Oh, it is a yet unknown, unfathomed privilege, to be allowed a long day of single-eyed service in our adorable Lord's vineyard. It may be your God has added to your days fifteen years, yea, twice fifteen. It may be that he has ordained you an instrument to plant the heavens with many stars, and bring many sons and daughters to his feet. Is this work worth staying for? It may be given you also, in the behalf of Christ, to suffer for his sake, and to know that of your Jesus in a seven times heated furnace, which no angel with outstretched neck has ever yet known of him, no, nor ever shall. It may be, my child, that in these added days you have such a lesson to learn, as you never yet learned, of what lurks in your naughty heart, something that shall lead you to cry with bitter tears, "Oh, that I had been put to bed when the candle of the Lord shined upon me, when by his light I walked *through* darkness."

But is one string of Hezekiah's harp broken by his fall? Is one chord untuned? Nay, has he not, from these very depths, had such melody put into his harp, as it could never otherwise have received? Has it not, by this very thing, been raised to concert pitch, "Worthy art thou, O Lord." Fear, then, NONE of these things that shall come upon you; be content to tarry even among lions, even among those that are set on fire of hell, while you see yourself but a mass of tinder, ready to be ignited every moment. Everlasting arms *cannot* give way, everlasting love *cannot* wax cold. Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it. May you never labour to give a lift at a to-morrow, for there is no strength imparted or promised equal to this. It is this that too often nearly breaks my shoulder, and makes all my loins at a stand. It is this that swallows up the enjoyment of thousands of to-day's mercies, and stifles the notes of praise and thanksgiving. Oh, for the perfect *uncarefulness* of the little child! the hope of a glad to-morrow often gilds its happy face, but to calculate upon a to-morrow's *wants* seems quite out of its reach. My darling little P—— is feasting upon his anticipated birth-day joys to-morrow week, over and over again, but laughs at mention of a cloud; he would eat the last bit of bread in the house to-day, quite sure that there would be more to-morrow. In this, then, may we be children, while in understanding we are men—men who have well learned and soberly weighed this certain truth—"In the world ye shall have tribulation;" men who are also as sure of the fact, "In me ye shall have peace."

..... Sometimes my heart sinks within me, and I feel most anxious about our precious F——y; I exclaim, Lord, thou *hast* known my soul in adversities; thou hast been *all*-sufficient. Be still, my heart, and be very sure that all is, and shall be, just as thou wilt rejoice that it should have been, when a few more years are come, and I shall go whence I shall not return. I was ashamed of my last letter, and what this is like I cannot tell, for it has been a bustling day with me; but it is well, you should cease from me, who am but dust and ashes; yet dust that shall show forth his truth for ever—redeemed dust, precious dust, since I was precious in his eyes.

LETTER LV.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

C——n, March 8th, 1837.

WHAT a *how do you do* world it is; sometimes I think my heart is just made up of it. Do but think of being in a country where such a sound has never been heard, nor ever will be; where health shall spring forth as spontaneously as sickness does here, and where the atmosphere chases away all pain, all sickness, all sorrow, all sighing, all death; and that is our own dear country, our purchased possession; sure and stedfast as the throne of God, and yet a little day and

we are there, there to go no more out, there, with all we have loved in Christ below, there, with our altogether lovely One. O woman, why weepest thou, with such a sunshiny home in view, and such a little step between? Perhaps you don't weep; I often do, but I don't think they are bitter tears; I am quite sure they are not bitter against my precious Lord, for I do see such wisdom, such love, such tender pity, such depths of mercy to one so only deserving of the lowest hell, how could I find fault with any thing? O foolish heart! how could I do any thing else, but for that Almighty arm which supports every moment, that pierced hand which pours in plentifully oil and wine into the wounds of the poor traveller, &c. &c.

LETTER LVI.

TO THE SAME.

November 7th, 1837.

FATHERLESS ten years! Ungrateful words! Actually with such a *tenderly* indulgent Father, that were he not God, and not man, I could think he was spoiling me, and too much sparing the rod; and yet, from his being so *very* tender over me, there is keenness in the slightest touch, or the shadow of a frown, that cuts *very* sharply indeed; but may it ever be thus, till I bask in that presence where is fulness of joy. I long

to be of yet quicker "scent," (and surely that is the quickest of all senses,) "in the fear of the Lord." I have not yet heard one millionth part of what the last rod has had to say; but I can listen to a very, very little at a time. I literally am a wonder to myself. I look back upon the past ten months, and seem to see as miraculous a power exerted, as if I had been raised from the grave; yea more, for truly of how many days and hours I may say, it was not I who lived or moved, or spoke, but Christ in me; it was not human strength, it literally was not *I*, it was so unlike myself; such a calm over such a peculiarly stormy disposition; such a self-possession in one of the most nervous of beings; you need no more think it was *I*, than that it was *you*; but you may just believe that God will do as he has said, when he engages to DWELL in us and *walk* in us; only, we don't find it out so much when our path is pretty smooth, and our strength pretty firm, and our way pretty plain; if ever you need it, you will know it, and I would only now say, as the practical comment, "Trust, and be not afraid, the Lord Jehovah is your strength," and it has only to be tried to be realized. It is the *anticipated*, or the *retrospected* trial, stripped of the accompanying grace and strength that is so crushing; so don't think it is *I*, or don't say, how could *I*? Consider the lilies, they toil not, &c.

. . . . The precious babe is better; it is no answer to my faith or prayer, for I literally had none. It seemed so manifestly the will of God to take him, that I became dumb, and opened not my mouth,

and only feared that any secret answering again in any dark corner of my heart, might compel my God to lay a heavier hand upon the dear child, to make me more unreservedly ready to let him go. Is he indeed to live here below to declare the praises of the Lord?

. . . . I ought to have answered your letter ere this ; but I leave undone the things that I ought to have done ; my sins of omission are wonderfully great and many, and stick about my poor feet every night, with such a tenacity that much soap and nitre would be indeed but vain things for removing them. Nothing less than a fountain, and that fountain flowing with the blood of God, can make them clean every whit.

. . . . I dare not comment on your expressions of love to me, for it would sound like humility, but it is not a shred of that ; I will believe it of you, if I can believe it of any under the sun ; yes, if I had been Elijah, I think I should have got fond of my two servants in black livery ; but, have I, really, ever brought you one bit of flesh or meat ? well, I would go and take my stand beside the poor ravens, and let my precious Master have all the praise.

LETTER LVII.

To E. S. P.

C——n, November 28th, 1837.

I AM quite at a loss to guess why you do not like me to write to you this birth-day. I can only think that

you are afraid of the LAST; but then, if I don't write this time, the last will be the last, won't it, dearest? Oh! that is a sledge hammer of a word, calculated to break these adamantine hearts into shivers. Yet, how unspeakably sweet in that mouth which is most sweet, say what it will. Does he call himself *the last*? Ah! every pulse of the heart beats with joy, and testifies, that is just what I want; One to stay when all leave; One to see that all is right, nothing left behind, nothing wanting, no enemy to get at us slyly, and thrust at us where we have no armour. How it tells us of his untiring love and patience, his determination to get his bride home; and then he says, "*With the LAST,*" what think you of those words? How do they cheer the halting, the poor, the breathless lag-last. Ah, my child, should this be *my* last, it will not be *his* last. You shall have a note from him, when you can receive none from the creature. You shall have a word from him when human voices die upon your ear, and human beings vanish from your sight. May he very truly be more our all and in all; yet I tremble to ask it. I look at one precious cistern after another, and say, must this be broken quite up, ere I know where to run to get my pitcher filled? How unconsciously have we written over many a one, "This same shall comfort me!" I could marvel that so loving a husband bears with us so long. I marvel not at the awful complaint, "I am broken with their whorish heart." Could I tell you what mine is now going through, with regard to our precious little gourd, you would almost glory over

me, and say, "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" He feeds well, but fades fast. Well, if he is soon to be housed, the "As" will still cover the day, and prop up under the burden. He is, indeed, our object of deep interest, lingering on the banks of Jordan, and seeming to say to each of us, when will you be quite ready to let me go over to that goodly land?

I trust, whenever we may be permitted to meet, I shall be able quietly to tell you of all the past, relative to our beloved F. I was afraid I should not like to mention her, or hear her talked of; but I bless my mouth-keeper this is not so. I can talk of her as of one just taken into the king's drawing-room; one who has left a few jobs to do in the kitchen, but with a VERY few steps between us. I take such an interest and pleasure in doing every thing just as I think she would like it done, and then I expect to praise over it all with her, and to see and admire the wisdom which ordered all for us.

Accept my tenderest love, and now take a glimpse of the heart of your God towards you in Zeph. iii. 17, and may you rest in him as he rests in you.

LETTER LVIII.

To O. A. P.

C——n, February, 1838.

I know not whether you mean to give me leave to write to you; but I do know that I must not forget my birth-day, or rather, the *night* when the Lord my God brought me forth out of Egypt. But how quickly did he turn the shadow of night into the morning! How gloriously did that sun rise which was no more to go down! what clear shining was there after rain! Dost thou, Lord, remember me and the kindness of my youth, and the love of mine espousals, when I would have followed thee through unsown, untried, wildernesses; and shall not I remember thee, who didst love me all unlovely and unloving, and drop these overflowings of thine heart upon my poor adamant? Dost thou remember when thy wearied wanderer was driven to seek her all in thee; and shall not I remember what she found in thee? Dost thou remember the kindness of my youth, because I took shelter in thy bosom from an unkind world; and shall I forget the loving-kindness with which the prodigal was welcomed to that bosom, while not one upbraiding escaped thy most sweet mouth? But why does "I remember thee" fall with something of an upbraiding sound upon my heart? Ah, there is a still small voice within explains the little note of reproof in this wondrous message. Where are the

frequency and the fervency of thy prayers? where thy glowing zeal for poor sinners? where thy hungerings, thirstings, longings, pantings, breakings? Hath he been a wilderness unto thee? Hast thou exhausted his unsearchable riches? Hath he ever sent thee empty away? What shall I say unto my Lord, what shall I speak, or how shall I clear myself? Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; and thou, thou only, canst say, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." Oh, the depth! Remember, *well* remember, these forty years; specially, these twenty-four years; very specially, this last year. I wonder what I said to you at the close of my last year. I should think, if I at all anticipated the events of the year, I must have anticipated the very nearly total destruction of both body and soul. I could not have foreseen circumstances more calculated to swallow them up quickly; and, behold, both are here alive this day: the former, in more than usual health; and the latter, a mass of evidence that he who keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps—that the redeemed soul is garrisoned in Omnipotence. . . . Say I these things to exalt the worm? My God, thou knowest. If I do, let them be the means of greatly abasing her, and leading her beloved sister to think unspeakably little of her. But I do hope, I do desire to speak it only to thy praise; for very, very sure I am, it is all thy doing; and I hope I do want every one to magnify **THY** work. Only, my child, **be** this—to trust without any reserve of an *if*, or a

but, or an except. Be you very sure that ~~WHATSOEVER~~ he calls you to, he will fit you for; and that, ~~WHAT-~~
~~EVEN~~ your day may be, your strength SHALL be equal
 to it. Flesh and heart must fail, quite fail, ere we fall
 flat upon THE strength of our heart, and our one
 abiding portion.

My poor letters now seem as if they were only to
 convince you that wherein any is weak, I am weak
 also, and still but a very babe. May they tend to the
 loosening of your soul from earth, and for the strength-
 ening of it, in leading to him who alone is strong.
 Our own God is greatly indulging us with providing
 for our wants. . . . Thou openest thine hand, and
 satisfiest the desire of every living thing. What a
 picture of that precious hand! what a treasury, and
 of what satisfying materials; how different from the
 creature's empty, unsatisfying hand! Those *onlys* in
 the Psalm yesterday (Psalm lxii.) fell with a ponderous
 weight; and, not the least so, the "only" plot of our
 many enemies. The Lord bless you very abundantly,
 and make your whole heart and soul and spirit one
 with himself; then how happy you will be! "giving
 thanks ALWAYS for ALL things."

LETTER LIX.

To E. S. P.

C——n, Nov. 20th,

I FEAR I have been too long in your debt, and even now I could listen to about twenty other calls, but then the voice of the 24th seems to drown all other voices. Dear Mr. Jones was speaking the other day of Mrs. B., and her complicated and extensive concerns, and his emphatic summary was, "I never saw that woman in a bustle." I could but think of the wisdom and prudence of not entangling the skein, but I have not learned it yet. I just know ~~too~~ far, that one grand point is to get hold of the *right end*. Oh how differently it all runs! And now, my beloved child, what can I wish for you as you enter upon another year, but that you may be enabled to take hold of every thing by the *right end*. And what is this but that precious One, who is both beginning and end, first and last? just to enter upon every duty, every providence with, "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." I don't know which of those prepositions I should recommend you to weigh oftenest; indeed, I must acknowledge with shame, that I never felt their weight till they glided off my pen just now; but they will be beautiful words for you to turn over, and taste and eat, when you enter into the cloud. How sweet "OF him, ALL things." Aye,

and how it will gladden sunshiny days, how does it enliven the most valuable present when the giver is dearly loved, and the gift known to have cost him much. "*Through him,*" aye, what shall we say of this sweet? the cloud, the sunshine, the food, the medicine, has not slipped on one side of him unnoticed, unsent, no, all weighed and ripened in his eternal counsels, his unchanging love, his unerring wisdom. How can we fear that which has come through a Father's hands, a Father's heart: and, "*to him,*" sweet quieter, grand centre, magnificent magnet! there the most crooked lines shall be made to meet and form additional rays of glory. Oh the mercy if our very hearts can finish this verse, and rejoice in this blessed truth; and then, while we rejoice in that all things are for our Bridegroom, to hear him rejoice in that all things are for his bride. To see him tossing about crowns and thrones, shaking earth and heaven, and then sweetly turning to his trembling bride, with "**ALL** things are for your sake!" Is it not almost crushing? It must be, if his left hand were not under our head, while his right hand doth thus embrace us. Indeed, indeed the bride may well look diligently to her toilet, and be careful to put on all her ornaments, and to act in character with such a bridegroom.

LETTER LX.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

C——n, April 26th, 1838.

MAY he who is mighty in power keep all our hearts from answering again or harbouring one hard thought of him! I thought you had enough to do, to live over again this week* last year; but he had other work for you. It was time to try whether we would spare him a fresh flower out of our richly cultivated parterre. He himself has taken out the stones, and fenced it round on every side, and planted it with the choicest plants, and watered it with his own blood; and is he not worthy of one lily to place in his bosom—just one, year by year? Oh, may he see no evil eye, no begrudging look; may he hear no whisper of dissatisfaction, no murmur of disapprobation. I am very jealous over my own heart, and over you all. That *was* a choice lily; I have very seldom seen its like; my heart rested on and tenderly loved her. Even *I* feel an immense void; what then must you all feel! But, what thanks CAN we render unto our God, for all the joy with which we joy over that lovely child, for the full assurance of faith that she is with the Lord! Surely it is only to lead us who tarry awhile to more grateful, more loving

* A beloved sister and a niece, in the course of the same week, in ~~two~~ successive years, were called to their eternal rest.

service. Let us all try and count up our mercies, and offer up praises for each; you can hardly think how it makes the solitary place glad. Dear — is always thus employed, so that you would not think he had a solitary inch in his heart; and yet you know the immense place that precious one occupied. We ought to learn of him; it is comely, and it is pleasant. . . .

. . . . You must of late have thought me very idle, or something worse, and yet you have not reproached me. Well, I am used to this from every one *but myself*; but we have sad quarrels, and frequently cannot settle it without many tears. If you have known what it is to pass night after night wondering what sleep is like, and thinking each hour double the length of its predecessor, and yet all this without any real pain, you have known what it is to get worn and irritable, as I, alas! have been. Nature has writhed and smarted under it; but oh, the wine and oil the spirit has found in those few words, "*Wearisome nights are APPOINTED me.*" Nothing has taken me but what has been common with other children in the family greatly beloved—*just wearisome*—and this from my own Husband, and above all, "*appointed*"—no chance. How each word fits in when he applies! What a well-prepared plaster for every sore! But alas! how often we need a sore before we care about the plaster; and how wonderfully uninteresting can that be, which at another time drops with honey or wine at every letter! But don't think I have been learning much; I am amazed at the deadness with which I have passed

through it all. I verily believe my mind might have been put in a nutshell most of the time. I feel now a little expansion of brain, which is very delightful, and which I now take inch by inch as a sovereignly free gift, in a way I never realized before, &c.

LETTER LXI.

To O. A. P.

S—n, Feb. 26th, 1839.

You will be rather surprised to see another letter dated from this dear spot; but could you just take a peep, you would, perhaps, be more surprised that we could think of leaving even this week. Your dear birth-day is upon my heart, and my moments for writing being few and far between, I must catch them as I can. I must begin by telling you that our watchful, loving Father made his tender mercies *speedily prevent us*, while we were in town; they were indeed timely, pitiful, great, loving, in the little adventure I must tell you of. As to my present employments, you would wonder how many "*other hearts*" I have, could you see my peculiarly dull pericranium on such subjects, contriving beds, curtains, &c. &c. &c.; but it is no trouble now, and I only tell you this, that you may be quite sure, if your dear Master sets you to *plough*, he will teach you what to say to the horses, and how deep to make the furrows,

and all about it. "Thou also HAST wrought ALL our works in us." Fear not, my darling child. You may have strange work, new work, perplexing work, in the coming year; but nothing strange, nothing new, nothing perplexing to him, who *hath* wrought all for you, and will just let it pass through your puny hands, that he may smile upon your willing heart, and prove to yourself, and to a naughty world, that you are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, the pattern of which was drawn in the mount of the eternal counsels, and shall all be filled in by your well-taught, well-instructed fingers. The dark back-ground is also to be filled in, but sovereign love has drawn the plan, and every stitch is right.

.... What a birth-day letter! as if it were to prepare you for feathering a poor little nest at the top of some falling tree, instead of directing you about making your nest in the Rock. Oh, my feeble cony, hide, hide, hide there, and sit and sing.

.... I will not say I have not had time to write, for I quite believe that there is a time for every thing that ought to be done, and that we impugn the wisdom of our infallible employer, when we say, "I *ought* to have done it, but had not time." No, "THE work of a day, in his day," is fitted as precisely as the strength required; and if we think we have more than we can do or bear, it is because yesterday's undone work, and yesterday's untransferred burden have got into the wrong place;

or it is that we are rebelliously lading to-day with the employment and cares of the morrow.

I have had many a fight to come to this conclusion ; the flesh and Mrs. Prudence, and all their clan, are vociferous in their denials of it ; but, after twenty-seven years of happy service, I do feel bound to stand up for my precious Master, and to declare that he is VERY pitiful, and never reaps where he has not sown, nor asks for more than he has reason to expect. O dear, have I filled a page with I don't know what ? no apology, no excuse. I meant it to be a confession of idleness and mismanaged time, and perhaps it will make me appear peculiarly wise and diligent in the laying out of this talent ; but lest I should thus deceive you. I will just say, in plain English, that you might frequently have seen me asleep on the sofa, when I should have been writing to you.

LETTER LXII.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

S——n, Oct. 26th, 1839.

YOU will like a little bit from this dear old place, and a little bit I will endeavour to send you ; though if I sit down, my abiding feeling generally is, I ought not to be sitting. How much wisdom it needs daily and hourly to discover the existing claims upon the present moment ; to hush nature and hear grace ; to

stand ready among Mary's servants with that one order, "WHATSOEVER HE saith unto you, do it." How easy to see, when the time is gone by, what ought to have been done; how uncommon to be of quick understanding in discovering, and of a ready mind in performing.

It was tenderly kind of you to remember my poor birth-day; my very heart was laid open and dissected in the sweet text, (Ps. lvi. 3.) I am such a peculiar coward, and, I should think, have more than a usual share of dread of sufferings for myself, and for the many too dear to me; to anticipate an evil nearly crushes; but having by line upon line in experience found that sufficient strength is given when the trial comes, I think I have a little learned not to think, and to put away a dreaded evil with "*what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*" So weak is my heart, and so nervous my frame, that had not my God tenderly and powerfully taught me a little of this, there are occupations or exhibitions of almost any day of my life which would make me ill to think of. Sometimes I think I am growing almost too *careless*, but I would not be ungrateful to my Care-carrier.

. . . . My birth-day was ushered in with such a sunshiny dream, I did much enjoy it. I was gazing upon a dying saint, with beams of heavenly joy radiating from her face, when a serious and almost anxious look was spread over it. I asked, "Have you any doubt or fear?" With an unspeakable look and manner she replied, "Fear! O, not the slightest, as to my perfect safety and justification; but you may well think that,

with such a Bridegroom, I must be a little particular about *my toilet*, and very desirous to be adorned as a bride ought to be for such a Husband." With this I woke, and found it but a dream—yet a dream which I trust will tell upon my heart whilst I sojourn in the Bride's chamber. It gave me a sweeter, happier view of sanctification than I could ever have got from book or self. Perhaps you won't see as I do; but it was a birth-day present from my Bridegroom, for which I would greatly thank him.

LETTER LXIII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Nov. 20th, 1839.

.... WHILE I was dreaming of the happy bride, the reality was taking place here, under Mrs. B's rejoicing eyes. A school girl, whom I had left very ill, but apparently very dead, was quickened one day, while her mother read, "Hath broken down the middle wall of partition." She started—"Broken down the wall! Is it so? Oh, I had such a dreadful feeling, that there was such an immense wall between me and Jesus, which *could NEVER* be broken down! And does it say, *hath* broken down?" &c. &c. Thus she applied it, or, I would say, my God applied it, and the Bride was quickened; but during the remaining ten days, it was, *indeed*, a Bride adorning and adorned by her Husband.

I would not tell it to many, and I am particularly faithless about death-beds; but it appeared such an exact illustration of my dream—FULL assurance of hope—simple taking God at his word—the brilliant shining forth of every grace and ornament, and, as sober Mrs. B. said, “such beams of glory in her face, as she never thought to see.” I wrote to ask if any one had gone home extremely happy, since I had been away, but heard nothing of it till my return.

. . . . Forgive this emptiness and shortness. . . .

LETTER LXIV.

TO THE SAME.

C—n; Feb. 8th, 1840.

I OUGHT to have written to you ere this, but I have been unable; my naughty eyes are misty with having parted this morning with our precious trio. Tears of joy, and tears of sorrow, I would hope, tears of praise, and tears of prayer. I never sowed so many tears over the five boys as this Christmas; but he who gives me the seed and the showers, gives me also to rest upon the sure word of promise, and I have no question of the certainty of the golden sheaves. I sometimes wonder how I *can* weep, when I am so enabled to see the end from the beginning; but the more clearly I see it, the more I often weep. God hath joined the two together, and none can put them asunder. What a treasury of contraries, mysteries, anomalies, foolishness, riddles, are

all the things concerning the kingdom of God! O that ministers would be content to be stewards of MYSTERIES. How it lacerates me, when they bring their puny rule and plummet, and scales and weights, to make all straight and even. It would grieve me less to see an oyster sit as prime minister of England, and a worm and a mole at his right hand and left. I believe in my very heart that they would be as competent to their calling, as the human mind to make that straight which God hath made crooked. How did I get to this? excuse my ramblings. I was weeping and smiling, and the smile and the tear were arguing which had the greater right to my poor face; the smile declared the tear had no business there, while such bright prospects lay before me; and the tear averred, that the smile could never have played there if the tear had not introduced it. I was called in to settle the debate, and each had so good a cause and argued it so ably, that I was obliged to decide, in spite of common sense, and all the learned counsellors that could plead on either side, that *both* had a right to occupy the place, and that both must oft-times resort thither, till he who united the two should sever them for ever, and with his own omnipotent hand wipe the last lingering tear away. Come then, tears, for weep I must, while my children are in an enemy's land. Come then, smiles, for rejoice I must, while he is faithful who hath promised, and who hath enabled me to believe that he will remember the word on which he has caused me to hope.

... How I have run on, and to little purpose; only take it as the droppings of a heart running over

with love to you. I am ashamed to say what I felt when I heard your face was so soon to be turned southwards again. I had foolishly hoped it was now set northwards, and would ere long cheer us here: well, may it only be **STEDFASTLY** set to go to Jerusalem, so that no Samaritan may wish to harbour you, or have any thing to do with you. O that we were more peculiar, more like the bride: have you not thought of our raiment of needle-work and wrought gold, and the being brought unto the King in it? &c. I am often surprised by things in your notes, but never more than when you talk of getting a crumb from mine; I marvel what you make it of.

LETTER LXIV.

To O. A. P.

C—n, Feb. 28th, 1840.

No, my beloved child, I quite believe that I shall **NEVER** forget the 28th, the day of my espousals, the day of the sadness and gladness of my heart, the day when a chafed, disappointed spirit found welcome, healing and rest in One, whom she had done her uttermost to be independent of, One whose door she would still have passed, had not every other door been closed; and yet, I cannot remember one single upbraiding, one look of reproach; the vilest name I could give myself, was made but a focus to concentrate the

rays of his love, till the marred piece of potter's clay sparkled like a little sun upon the dunghill. The joy of Hersthal over his newly discovered planet, was beggarly to the rapture with which I first gazed upon the word *transgressor*, reflecting the beams of the Sun of righteousness. "He made intercession for the transgressors." I well remember being so dazzled, that for a time I thought it a delusion, a misprint. It was something so altogether new to my proud, hard-working spirit, that I could almost wonder I did not erase it, and put in, "the penitent," or, "the humble," or one of nature's proud epithets. I have heard it said, "bad men *could* not have written the Bible, and good men *would* not." No, indeed, for more reasons than one, I do not believe the bravest man in the Christian army would have dared to trust his fellow-soldiers with what God has trusted them with. There would have been a scabbard for this, a case for that, and a scant measure for the abundant consolations, and a good fencing round promises, till every battle was fought, and won. Who would venture to say to the soldier just entering upon his campaign, "you ARE more than conqueror, no weapon formed against you shall prosper?" &c. &c. How poor grey headed *reason* skulks into the corner, muttering as she goes, "*rather dangerous I think.*" I'm glad you do think so, old Eve, that wanted to be as wise as God! now you may just find the difference, and the oftener you are mortified and set aside the better. Yes, I think, that word "*transgressors,*" was the first which ever glowed with all the lovely attractions of free grace.

I can't think what made me tell you about it now, for I dare say I have told you dozens of times before; but your kindly thinking it necessary to remind me of the 28th, brought up a few prominent specks of by-gone days, and like an old traveller, I find a pleasure in telling them over and over again; but how you can be so weak as not to be weary of them, or so civil as not to betray a yawn, does surprise me! An old traveller *ought* to be a good one; accustomed to all the vicissitudes of hill and dale, comfort and discomfort, storm and sunshine, rough and smooth. But, truly, the longer I journey, the more difficult does it appear to me in every sense of the word to be a *good traveller*. To *take* every thing in a right spirit; to *do* every thing in a right spirit; to *act* as one who can pass over the ground but once; to be diligent in doing all the work that lies in the way, and yet not entangled or hindered by that work; to make *proper* use of fellow travellers, neither holding them too cheap, nor prizing them too highly; to *run*, and yet with *patience*; to have eyes all around, and yet no eye but for Jesus; to be quite content, yet pressing on; to be quite alive and quite *dead*. Is all this easy? I trow not; the way appears to me to narrow and to steepen as I proceed; not a hope of reaching the end dawns, but as I know myself to be leaning on the Beloved; in his strength I feel as safe as if already at home; looking off from him, I see a bottomless pit on either side, into which I know not whether head or feet would first plunge, but, probably, the fall would be simultaneous.

But really one's head runs round, as we say, with

the swarms of creatures in the narrow way, running hither and thither, and no one knows whither; some catching butterflies at the very edge of a precipice; some springing up to see what's in the moon, or to ask her how long she is to last; others digging into the earth, to consult those who mutter and peep, to ask how and when it was made; they have made lighters of some leaves of the Bible, just to put a little spark to their farthing rushlight; and now they are groping down into the bowels of earth, till the foul air extinguishes, or time burns out the taper; and I have to go so very, very near to their deep holes, and one and another says, "Do look in, it can do you no harm to look, they are eminently holy, learned men." O my soul, come not thou into their secret. Then there's a little company who do look like pilgrims, indeed their very dress and manners would say, "we are the people, and vital godliness abides with us." Aye! I'd rather not see so much of "we are" in your looks and manners; and what's the matter with the good old way, that you have raised up that little cramped, cockling path, just for you, and yet you all want to go abreast, and every body is to be nobody, and nobody is to be everybody. What do you call it? spiritual socialism? It does not look like the work of my God. I see gradation and order in all his ways and works, from the useful elephant to the industrious bee; from the thinking head to the working thumb. The Lord keep me from setting a foot upon your path! there are quicksands and gins of pride and vanity; a "voluntary humility," own mother to the grossest arrogance. And

now comes a large company, robed in full canonicals, and looking so like dear old mother church, that all the leanings of birth and education side with them. But stay; what a crackling of starch and buckram! Oh yes; these form two-thirds of their devotions; and what is that which they are lifting so high? Is it the cross of Christ? Well, it is the *wood*, but my Lord is not there. Ah, where, where have they laid him? They have buried him under the font; and can my soul rest, or journey with such? God forbid! rather let me never see again a shred of my old mother's garments, never hear again the accents of a voice which have a magic charm to open the cells of prayer and praise in my heart. Let me for ever bid adieu to these, rather than have the shell without the kernel, the body without the spirit. And is it easy to let thine eyes look right on, and thine eye-lids straight before thee, in such a wilderness maze as this? Oh, Lord God, thou knowest, it is easy, if thou wilt be eyes to me in this great wilderness; it is easy, if I walk up and down in the name of the Lord; yes, it is done, and well done, if thou, my God, dwell in me, and WALK IN me; then shall I walk worthy of God; then shall all my ways be ordered aright. I shall not turn to the right hand or to the left, but shall remove my foot from evil.

Have I actually filled more than a sheet, and all about the old traveller! and not a word about your dear birth-day, and your journeyings in the desert! Well, that which has been is that which shall be. If you are young and I am old, you will have to say one day, "I HAVE BEEN young, and now am old; and if

spared till then, I know you will add, "yet saw I NEVER the righteous forsaken;" ah, and you may peep back at your old sister, and add, nay, nor the abominable, the unthankful, the backsliding, the heady, the high minded, and the disobedient. . . .

March 2nd.—After I had sent off a long letter directed to F——, I found you were still in London. This has disquieted me, not only as to your health, but lest the naughty thought, "She has forgotten my birth-day," should find a momentary lodging in your heart. Ah, how keenly do we feel the most distant suspicion of our love and faithfulness, especially when we are conscious of loving with an intensity and unvariableness that, to our own minds, can admit of no question. Earnestly do I desire for you, that holy elevation of character which flows from the quiet assurance, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his; his desire is toward me." The Bride will not forget her attire, and will be specially careful to put on the ornaments which her Beloved has given her; and to show that she prizes them as his selection and his gift, she does indeed now pay attention to her toilet, seeing she hath found grace in his eyes, and that he rests in his love; and he is to her "a covering of the eyes unto all that are with her, and with all other." Oh, that we may comprehend better what our soul means, when it ventures to say, "The Lord is my portion!" Oh, that we may better understand what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. . . . But I only meant to tell you that your birth-day letter was gone to F——.

LETTER LXV.

TO HER MOTHER.

S——n, April 30th, 1840.

I FEEL as if I must write to you once more from this much-endear'd spot, my precious mother; when, or *erer*, shall I write from here again? Well, that is no business of mine, and we always suffer if we are busy-bodies, and more especially if we endeavour to pry into those concerns which our God, in equal love and tenderness, conceals from us. I can never thank him enough for the thick veil which he hung over many a coming day, the glimpse of which would have beclouded every ray of sunshine once enjoyed here. Oh, he is kind! May we just live by the hour to glorify him, and do the work appointed for us; for every other life is but death!

How I longed for you all last night at our missionary meeting! Our beloved old pastor, Mr. Jones, was almost more than his former self, with such a crown of glory as, I should think, could hardly be found again under the sun,—thick, flowing locks of the most silvery whiteness, and so truly found in the way of righteousness! He began thus: "A person once wrote a book, which he called, 'The last words of Baxter;' not long afterwards he wrote another, styled, 'MORE LAST words of Baxter.' Dearly beloved friends, I have frequently given you what I verily and truly thought would be the last words,

but through the wonderful forbearance, patience, and love of my God, I am now permitted to give you *more last* words; they shall be few, and may God make them useful." He then dwelt upon the tremendous state of all who know not God—gave a lively comparison of popery, and the spider and his web.—
 "I warn you, in the name of my God, I warn you! *I shall escape, I shall be clean out of the way;* but you may have a popish chapel in this village, and let me tell you, if you have, it will be filled, in spite of all your privileges; such is human nature, and our strong propensity to drink in what is evil. I tell you, God has but one instrument with which to build up Zion; he may have many ways, but he uses but one instrument, and that is his own *eternal* Word. Prize it, pity the nations who have it not, be in earnest to send it forth," &c. He stayed the whole time, and was cheerful as ever at the end, though it was a long meeting.

LETTER LXVI.

TO E. S. P. AND O. A. P.

C—n, Nov. 1840.

. . . . **WHAT** tender mercies we have to reckon up! such health, and peace, and quietness, and confidence; it is really perfect peace at present; I feel bound to own it, to the praise of him who can speak the storm

into a calm. To *anticipate* such a storm as this* would have been overwhelming; but truly when he giveth quietness, there is not a ripple. . . . And now, beloved sisters, what shall I say to you? You are at a distance on the shore, and it may be you are beginning to look at the wind, and to see the sea boisterous, and some gale may waft far away from you the cheering sound, "It is I, be not afraid." Oh, that you may just see him, see all his heart, and hear all he says! It is quite nothing but love; yes, you believe he rests in his love towards us; you are quite sure *all* things are ours; you know he has prepared us for all he has prepared for us. Fear not to leave us on such a bosom—in such arms. Did we not think and say, our bright speck probably was to strengthen us for some storm? . . .

. . . . We have been so very happy of late—the dear absent children so well—the household so peaceful! But oh the list! It is almost affronting to the *untold* to pretend to tell of mercies. Do praise and pray for us, yea, and rejoice with us, &c. . . .

LETTER LXVII.

To E. S. P.

C——n, Nov. 21st, 1840.

I THINK I feel doubly pleased to have a very good report to make to-day, as it will reach you on your

* The scarlet fever had just appeared among the children.

dear birth-day. Ah, foolish heart! it would like to have nothing but good reports and joyous tidings to send you for this opening year; and One who loves you infinitely better, but with infinitely wise love, may be preparing to send you a roll written within and without—a roll which he will spread before you—a roll wherein are written lamentation, mourning, and woe. But dry your eyes, my child, and gaze upon the hand which spreads it. Do you see the print of the nail, and can you ask, “Lovest thou me?” Ah, did you get a glimpse of his heart, did you observe the reluctance there, the unwillingness, the affliction in ALL your afflictions, did you not see the other hand pointing to “the END of the Lord,” showing you that he was only just bringing about the very thing you have so often asked for? Yes, if he *has* a dismal roll to spread before you, it shall be so lighted and gilded with rays of love and glory, you shall almost forget that it is a cloud, while it does but set off those wondrous rays. Now do *“SETTLE”* it in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand upon what may be in this roll, or in that cloud. You cannot get strength, and joy, and peace, in *anticipation*, but *with* the trial they will be sure to come. Our light has burst forth almost *before* we had any obscurity, the dear children are so much better. . . .

. . . . What a summer and autumn of peculiar mercies I have had, and still he is showering them down; what a fruitful garden I ought to be under such showers! He LOOKED—oh, that word, that look! But “my vineyard which is MINE is BEFORE ME;” pre-

cious truth! like a clear heat upon it, considering what is best for it, *aye*, and *doing* it, though it be a north wind, &c. May you enjoy the blessedness of believing; blessed is she that believeth.

.... Mercy has embraced us, and does embrace us on every side, even blood-bought mercies; and when I ask, what shall I render? I find I am still to *take*, I am invited to his storehouse to offer him of *his own*! It pleased the Father that in our most loving, most gracious Husband and Brother should *all* fulness dwell, and well may it please his people, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, the purchase of his blood, the peculiar treasure of his soul. How boldly may we say, "All that he has is ours," and it would fill eternity to count over the riches of this "All." May we be diligently prying into our treasure now, and take largely out of our precious storehouse for the refreshment of our souls by the way.

LETTER LXVIII.

To O. A. P.

C—n, February 27th, 1841.

HOME, sweet, sweet home! so sweet, that of very faithfulness there must be some little thorn to testify,

"This is not your rest;" aye, and there is a good loud cry from within, and many a bitter groan commenting upon the why and wherefore, "because it is polluted." The text for to-day ("My strength faileth because of mine iniquity") was all in tune, and played upon the minor key to my tears. Yet, really, the bare appearance of a chastening does manifest such bowels of mercies, such FITTIFULNESS, such MINDFULNESS; so thoroughly "the Lord *thinketh* upon me;" such renewed proofs of my indulgent Father's heart, such making haste to help and relieve me! I do earnestly hope you may not be tempted to think one hard thought of him, or for one moment to question his love, his wisdom, or his power. My chief fight of faith is about the latter, and yet I could almost *reason* myself out of it; perhaps, by the bye, that is the cause why *faith* can find so little footing. Power over *all* flesh, power over sinful flesh, power over mouldered flesh, and not power over my poor, weak flesh, to patch it up for a little season! What a beast am I before him! and yet, the dearly beloved of his soul, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing!

My precious child, this probably will not reach you on your birth-day, and I am not a little tired to-night; but I must try to make you believe more than ever the love that I have for you, and how I do ask my Master to restore you a hundred-fold into your bosom for all your love towards me, and faithful servitude; and whatever more you may do for me, may you be enabled more to serve the Lord Christ in poor me, doing it as *to* him, *from* him, and *for* him.

What a relief it is to me to have such a treasury to go to for my wondrously kind friends, and to know that even to the cup of cold water he will pay them. It is thus he relieves me of what would, otherwise, indeed be a burden too heavy for me to bear.

May he just open to you his "good treasure," and enable you to help yourself very abundantly. He loves to be treated as a King, and taketh pleasure in those who hope largely in his mercy. May he rest in his love to you, finding no questionings of it from the heart on which he rests.

LETTER LXIX.

To E. S. P.

C——n, November 22nd, 1841.

My beloved E——, do you know it is twelve days since you wrote to me, and love is a greedy thing; it makes me fear that you must be still single handed, with quite as much as you can possibly get through. I was going to say *more*; but this would be to speak evil of your adorable Master, of whom no true servant shall say that he is "a hard man." No, no; if he require a crop, every blade, every ear shall be first wrought in Christ Jesus. He will minister seed to the sower, bread for his food while he is at work; and, while the happy labourer just scatters the prepared seed from the arms of hands made strong by the

hands of the mighty God of Jacob, this same wonder working God is both multiplying the seed sown, increasing the fruits of righteousness, blessing with the blessings of heaven above, and the blessings of the deep that lieth under. We know little about these blessings of the deep, and often miscall them; but this we do know, that in HIS hand are the deep places of the earth; and we can see the print of the nail in that hand, and can we question if any thing but a blessing can come out of it? He that ascended is the same also that descended, that he might fill all things, that his beloved may be in no height, no depth, but she may find her Bridegroom there, and exultingly exclaim, "STILL with THEE! I will fear no evil."

Now, my child, if any body or any thing would set you to do more than you can do, more than you ought to do, know whence the temptation cometh and whither it goeth. *This is not of the Father*; oh, no, it does not look like the Father, does it? I was much impressed by a few words from dear Mr. Browne at a Bible meeting. I believe they touched a sore place, and that made me so feel and remember; "Never come to one duty with your hands stained with the blood of another." Oh, I have often had bloody hands, while poor, slain, or maimed duties have been lying around me and I was bustling on to one which I considered of more importance. But duty is duty, and each has its place; and we shall make but a "skeleton piece of work," if we attend only to outlines and neglect filling up. Some mornings I must acknowledge I have had such

a crush of occupations before me, that I have felt almost to sink with double weight upon my bed, crying, "Who is sufficient?" I have been guided with strength by the sweet assurance, his hands *SHALL* be sufficient for him;—nothing to spare, but *sufficient*. With this I spring up, and endeavour to undertake the day, not by the day, no, nor by the hour, but just by the moment. I find if I put two moments together they are too heavy for me; but just as my Father gives them to me, one by one, I can fly lightly along with them, and do all that he has before ordained that I should do; and all the rest is wood and hay, and stubble, spider-spinning out of our own bowels, which shall not profit us or others.

.... I have told you nothing of my most tender, earnest desires for you. The fulness of the every day salvation,—kept as the apple of the eye; and the circumspection of one who felt that she was so closely watched and kept—yes, privilege involves duty; and if the Lord says for our comfort we *are* so kept, he says it also to lead his children to do every little thing as just under his eye.

LETTER LXX.

To O. A. P.

WRITTEN WHEN VERY ILL.

February 28th, 1812.

No, the little charm must not, need not be broken, I will send something that you shall call a birth-day letter, my very precious child, and you have had many shabby ones. He *scaleth* up the hand of every man—none could help, that all men may know *his* work; and he is doing it in his own very gentle, steady, firm, tender, loving way. I just turn to him, and he is ready, and that *every* moment. Oh, it is wonderful. Happy birth-day! I am brought nearer to my right place than I could have hoped for, much nearer than I could have asked for had I known the way. We little know how much “ye shall be as gods” still rules in us: to come to “*no might*,” to *lore* no might, to be just nothing, and to glory in infirmities, these are lessons not learned in a day, nor learned at all, but as our own dear Teacher leads on letter by letter. . . . My own ever dearest mother! tossed about with all the different accounts and plans, and so kindly willing to spare one of you. The Lord reward her a hundred-fold into her bosom. May she increasingly love my precious Jesus who has been such a nurse, physician, comforter, tender helper to her dear child.

. . . . I have no pain any where; what think you of

such a stayed east wind? . . . I feel lying under showers of answers to prayers—so sweet.

. . . . I have written too much. May you know more than ever of *his* work, my child, and be willing to have the hand of every man scaled up. Tender love to all.

LETTER LXXI.*

March 5th, 1842.

My very, very precious mother, I grieve to have been such a grief to you, but I do trust we are all experiencing blessed fruits of these gifts. The Bible and prayer, much more precious, and beyond every thing precious, that Brother born for adversity; we get nearer to him, and understand a little more of his unsearchable love.

. . . . After all, my precious mother, the way is so sweetly simple and plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. If we are but willing to be nothing, and to let Jesus be all, we are safe, and I am sure we are very happy.

Here your helpless child has lain, "complete in *Christ*," and who can add to complete?

Accept my very, most grateful, fullest love; give much to the unspeakably dear ones around, and pray and praise for your own Helen.

* Her last letter, written a few days before her death.

LETTERS TO J. P. P.,

HER ELDEST BROTHER.

LETTER I.

February 17th, 1816.

.... I HEARD a good deal of you yesterday, my dearest brother. I could have trembled for you, but that I called to mind you had no less a pilot for your little bark than the King of kings and Lord of lords; that he had undertaken to conduct you safely through the most tempestuous seas, and that his promise never has, never can fail. Yes, our warfare is accomplished. "'Tis finished, still may answer all, and silence every cry." I have been to see poor Mr. — to-day, and found it necessary to enforce the doctrine of the final perseverance of believers; he said he was afraid of coming to Jesus lest he should fall away; and he groaned over the weakness of flesh and besetting sin, which might at last quite tear him from his Saviour. He wept much, nor do I wonder, while entertaining such thoughts; but, blessed be God, we are born, *not* of corruptible seed; "but we are confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us

will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This doctrine I once scarcely dared to venture upon; but I am convinced that every thing which increases our debt to the blessed Jesus, increases also our love and grateful zeal.

. . . . I trust you bear me on your heart to the God of all mercy. It does rejoice me to remember that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. What joy ought I then to feel, when I think of my High Priest, entered within the veil into the holy of holies, presenting his own blood for my polluted soul—making intercession *for the transgressors*, and disappointing Satan of his desires—preserving his poor grain of wheat to that joyful day, when he shall separate it from its chaff, and place it in his own heavenly, happy garner.

We have dear S—— with us now; she has been reading to us Cowper's life, written by himself. I know not any thing more calculated to inspire you with an assurance of the extreme fatherly love and watchfulness of our God, or to point out more forcibly the darkness and shades of death which might overwhelm the soul, did not the bright morning star arise. Five times, by five different methods, did the poor creature endeavour to destroy himself; the interpositions are nothing less than miraculous, and then, when the halm of Gilead was poured in, his soul was in an ecstasy; his first love is so portrayed, I felt more than I can describe, and, what I hope not to forget. I could remember the time when that joy was mine; when a great portion, at least, of that love

glowed in my now frozen heart ; but I remembered it only to shock me with a view of my present deadness, and to make me cry out in agony of soul, " O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of my God shined brightly on me ! " I have neglected the dearest of friends. I could fervently thank him when he had brought me through the Red Sea, and now that he has added to this mercy his tender care in carrying me thus far through the wilderness, my heart becomes colder, and chills the bosom from whence alone I derive one ray of warmth or life. How much has he to say against me for having left my first love ! I really do detest my horrid heart for its ingratitude.

I was with H—— the other day ; he wants to hear from you ; I said you had not even time to write to us. I could almost be sorry that he expects it, as others will also ; but I believe if we look to the counsels of the heavenly court, we shall find nothing there that would condemn any action, that tended to bring a soul nearer to the adorable Jesus. What difficulties did they encounter who took off the roof of a house to let one down in his bed to the heavenly Physician ! Did he think they went too far ? He beheld their faith, and spoke life and peace.

.... Be earnest in prayer for dear M—— ; I feel assured the Lord has purposes of mercy towards her. It seems sad for her to stay at R——, but we have a friend we may *trust* in, when we cannot understand him. I never lost any thing by trusting implicitly to him ; my losses have been through unbelief and distrust : he still says, " According to your faith be it

unto you." May your Father and my Father, your God and my God, bless and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

November 14th, 1816.

How could you exist here! Nay, it was not you that lived, but Christ which lived in you: the life of my beloved brother is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord my God. How secure! how far above, out of the reach of worms! Nay, it is hid; they know not where to attack it; how harmless is their rage! They who "seek our life, seek the life of God." Yet, "my son, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path." If thou wouldest be blessed, "stand not in the way of sinners," neither "sit in the seat of the scornful." I desire to thank my God most fervently that he hath opened your eyes to see more and more clearly that there is no communion between light and darkness, no concord between Christ and Belial. I feel assured that this is the teaching of the Spirit, and that those are in a very low form in Christ's school, who have not learned it. I pray to be taught it more practically. I pray for a heart to assent to it. Let us remember that Satan is an able teacher on the contrary side, in this lesson, and has

but too apt a scholar in our worldly hearts. We have great need to suspect the whispers of the expediency or necessity of keeping in a little with the world. I do not find it *once* recommended in the word of truth. Can the soldiers of two such open and eternal enemies as God and the world enter into any agreement, any bond of union? What! is the warfare accomplished? are the arms laid down on both sides? or is the Christian warrior to be the first in yielding, and in making concessions, which the other would scorn? Surely we ought to suspect that there is some lurking affection for our former commander; some unacknowledged partiality to his ways: we are *rather* inclined to shrink from a yoke, which our cold, unhealthy souls too often find any thing but easy, and from our burthen, which our flagging, faithless souls think any thing but light. It is not sweet to us to be counted the filth and offscouring of all things; we do not like to have the sign of the cross on our foreheads too visible; we would erase sometimes, or at least veil that glorious badge, which an archangel would prize in his crown. "Ashamed of Jesus," might, I fear, be stamped on many words and actions, which we would fain style prudent or charitable. But why do I run on thus to my dearest brother, to one who *feels*, what, I fear, I only acknowledge? Oh! that I might say, "I am dead," and "my life is hid with Christ in God." What is this world, its pomps, pleasures, allurements, comforts, to a dead man? Indeed, indeed, we ought not to have a spark of life for this world, or any of the lusts thereof. How entirely dead

is the worldling to all spiritual things! Oh, let us learn of the children of this world in this: they serve their master, more steadily, more faithfully, than we serve ours. There is much to be learned in this house. Methinks God takes us to christian families, to show us *what* to do, and to worldly ones, to show us *how* to perform it. What unwearied exertions, what activity, what devotedness to their pursuits! I blushed when I saw their eager anxiety to get a little ivory ball into a right hole, and could but reflect that I had often not felt so much solicitude, to bring a soul to heaven! . . .

. I have just received the frank from F——; M——y seems very sanguine about dearest ——.
Oh, let us take heaven by violence for him; those are awful words, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Now and then I am enabled to wrestle for a blessing; but it is not the steady, persevering knocking of the poor woman, displayed at the unjust Judge's door. Rather might the Lord say, "Thou hast not called upon me, oh Jacob, thou hast been *weary of me*, oh Israel."

We have spent a very happy week at A—— C——; it pleased the Lord to sharpen his tool once more, and to bring it into use in that dear village. Are you earnest in prayer for me? Could you see the hosts that are encamped against me, you would call down a legion from heaven to fight on your poor sister's side. Mr. M. is blindly partial to me, but he knows me only by hearsay. I would thankfully acknowledge, that what at the time seemed to have a tendency to puff up, was truly painful to me, and

~~watched me~~ even to the dust; but I am aware that ~~these things~~ are replete with deadly poison, which may be lurking unseen in every vein of my heart, and may display its baneful consequences at a time when I look not for it. Had I not an *infallible*, an unerring Physician, I should give all over for lost; but he who has drawn the serpent's sting, has a sure antidote for the poison under its tongue. How careful should we be, my beloved brother, of each other's souls! I too often feel an inclination to commend highly what I see of Jesus in my friends. If I am betrayed into this sin, I look upon myself afterwards as one who has carried wine and milk to strengthen and refresh the old man upon the cross, and to cause new and stronger struggles between him and my friend's soul;—we become ambassadors for Satan, and do his work.

Our God has enabled us to appear a peculiar people here; we are in the busle of packing and visitors. I am ashamed to send you such a letter, &c.

LETTERS TO C. T. P.,

HER SECOND BROTHER.

LETTER I.

February 23rd, 1815.

I THINK I am indebted to you for some of, if not quite, the happiest moments of my life. I have often been almost ready, with St. Paul, to wish myself accursed from Christ, might my brother but take my place at the well of life. Remembering how many thousands will depend upon you for the bread of life, I could have wished myself starved, that you might have wherewithal to supply yourself and others. But now my grateful heart is called upon to adore that tender Father, who has enough for all and to spare, who has prepared many mansions, and will not let those so strongly attached in life be separated in eternity. O my brother, when I think of having you to walk with me in the narrow path, to join with me in trampling a wretched world under foot, to stand with me on the right hand side in the day of judgment, with the same robe of righteousness, casting your crown with me before the throne, and rejoicing together through a blessed eternity—I feel that the

warmest wishes of my heart are gratified, and the strongest claim is laid upon me for the most devoted love to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Do not think me too sanguine; when any are brought sincerely to acknowledge with the heart, what the lips have so often uttered—that they are miserable sinners, and that there is no health in them—then they take the first step towards that Physician, who finds no case too difficult for him to cure, and who has sweetly promised that no one who comes to him shall be cast out. The mountain between us and Christ is *pride*; it is he alone can lay it low. Adams says, “Christ thinks no one too bad to receive, if they do not think themselves too good to come.” I hope your eyes are really open to see how vile you are in the sight of a holy God, who hates even the unclean thought and idle word. Should Satan endeavour to cloud this from you, and to make you imagine that you have not been worse than others, that you have read your Bible, said your prayers, been sorry when you have done wrong, &c., just take the trouble to examine the best thing you ever did: I think you will cry out with Beveridge, “I cannot pray but I sin, I cannot give an alms but I sin, I cannot go to church or read my book but I sin; my best actions need repentance, and what must be done with the worst?” It is these considerations which urge us to flee to the city of refuge ere the avenger of blood overtake us; it is this which brings us to Christ for the remission of sins which are past, for the purging of a soul born in sin and under wrath; it is he alone can make the tree

good and his fruit good, can give us safety and joy unspeakable here, and prepare us for the company of heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect. A gentleman who was unwilling to be persuaded of original or actual sin, was requested by his friend to set down a faithful account of every thought, word, and action of one week; he promised to comply, but found one day's catalogue so black, that he shrunk from the task, freely owned himself a helpless sinner, and gladly fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the Gospel. . . . Above all, study the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, and pray for the spirit of prayer; be very diligent in the use of every means; you know not how short your time may be to prepare for endless years. . . .

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

May, 1818.

. . . . AFTER all the happy plans that I can frame for our meeting in the wilderness, a cloud will hang heavy upon all. There is but *one* unclouded union, *one* perfect enjoyment of each other; . . . all this sounds very harsh to flesh and blood, but grace has a ready answer, grace can tell wondrous accounts of the preferment it expects from the great Bishop of souls; it aspires to a heavenly mitre, a throne, a sceptre.

When those who have sought preferment from worms are leaving all behind; are about to be brought down to the lowest chambers of hell for ever; sunk lower by the blood of those souls, whom they have caused to err from the fear of man; when about to leave all those miserable comforters, whom they have sacrificed heaven to please; then, he who has sought preferment of his God alone, finds the blessedness of his choice; then is he made a king and priest unto his God; then he receives a crown of life; then he is confessed before men and angels, advanced to the highest possible preferment, not for a few fleeting years, but for eternity. Who can tell what shall be done unto him whom the King of heaven delighteth to honour? Well may the soul, in contemplating such preferment, trample on all the riches and honours of this world, cease from man, and boldly say to the tempter, who is showing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the *glory* of them, "Get thee hence, Satan." The Lord enable you, my most beloved brother, to choose that better part, which shall not be taken from you.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

November 8th, 1841.

Do you think I have not thought of you to-day?
Oh, how much! and my fingers would have been upon

paper ere this, but Mr. B—— frightened me with saying, "Take care that you do not come to a duty with hands stained with the blood of another duty," murdering one, to make room for another. Oh, my conscience did bring me in guilty! I have three minutes to tell you that I have remembered you in my best moments, and I asked great things for you. This will be a great year for you, probably; but it is your strength to sit still, or, when tired of sitting, to lean on that bosom which cares for you with so great care, * and just leave all to one, who performeth *all* things for you. Soon said, not easily done; but it is something to *know* our privilege, and to aim at the enjoyment of it. We *know* the love that God hath to us. Oh when shall we be shamed out of questioning the love of a heart that is just all love? Not, I suppose, till his own dear hand wipes the tear away; and I cannot think from what source that tear will come; I sometimes think it will be shame, that we have ever doubted, or answered again.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

December 28th, 1841.

No, my beloved C——, a want of brotherly love in your heart, is never suspected for a moment by me; can I say this of a heart that sticketh closer

than a brother? Well, thanks be to his own mighty keeping! I trust I can, and when I compel him to smite, I feel grieved to afflict a heart which loves so tenderly, that in all my affliction he is afflicted. How very lovely is the faithfulness of that love, which so watches the very first deviation of heart, and so steadily, yet so reluctantly visits it! "I will visit their offences;" is not each word very precious? "*I*"—he won't trust any one else—"will," no fear of "Nay, my son," in his family visit; only for a season, till the errand be done; not the beloved child, but the "*offences*;" and "with a rod," no weapon for destruction, only of fatherly correction. Oh, his mouth is *most* sweet! not a word too many, or too few. How happily you can trust your sister in such hands, cannot you, dearest C——? though I know it is easier to trust oneself, than another; but he is so specially tender over me, and if you had the least idea what a very stubborn, rebellious, careless, unthankful, unholy child I am, you would not wonder at the frequency, but at the intermission of stripes; not at the sharpness, but at the extreme gentleness.

LETTERS TO H. G. AND E. M. G.

LETTER I.

TO H. G.

December 21st, 1816.

I FEAR you must have thought me very unkind and inattentive, in not having answered your welcome letter before; but travelling, &c. &c., has hitherto put it quite out of our power. I humbly trust my God has “smelt a sweet savour” from the incense of prayer and praise, borne in the golden censer of our Priest’s righteousness; but seldom do I groan under a deeper sense of the burden of this earthly house, than when I would speak of the goodness of the Lord, and declare what wonders he hath done. I long for the wings of a dove to flee away to that glorious land, where every note is praise, pure praise, unsullied with vile, secret liftings up of heart, unconfined by a frozen heart and stammering tongue. I long to learn of angels and archangels, and all the glorious company of heaven, to praise my Beloved; though highest angels cannot sing that song which Jesus has put into the mouths of rebels. Angels never fed on the Lamb

slain for us; they have never had galling chains broken off by the hand of their God, you, melted by the blood which streamed from that hand; they have not been carried in Jehovah's bosom through the Red Sea; though they join *for* us, they cannot join *with* us, in the song of Moses and the Lamb. What a song will that be! how will our hearts glow, how will our hearts resound, when we recount to listening angels that great deliverance, which Jesus has wrought for us with a mighty hand and with an out-stretched arm! I pray that your little girl may swell the chorus: may you be enabled to give her to the Lord, and he will restore you a hundred-fold into your bosom. It is a blessed thing to be able to consecrate all we have, and all we are to God; we put it out then with usury, and shall ever be gainers.

I rejoice that my dearest E—— was so supported and comforted. I feel assured God will make all her bed in her sickness, for underneath are the everlasting arms. May she be raised up with a heart more singly, more simply devoted to him; with her graciously preserved life, more entirely hid with Christ in the Preserver. . . . All that is within me, I trust I may say, blesses the Lord for the wonders he is doing for the children of men, at dear H——d; and I desire to be more earnest in prayer for you, my dear brother, that you may not be exalted above measure. How sweet is the assurance to me, that our God will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. How sweet the anticipation of that day, when

I shall see you shining as the brightness of the "firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

My heart sometimes sinks at the prospect of being left here, without my dearest companions; but then, there is such a fulness in that promise, "My God shall supply *all* your need;" not all my wants and desires; O what a curse would that be; but all that is really needful for me. With a Husband, a Brother, a King, a Priest, a Saviour, a God, what can I stand in need of? Lord, thou knowest, a heart *to look upon thee as such*.

May the Lord stablish, strengthen, settle you, make you thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work; a workman that need not be ashamed, when every work and every secret thing is brought into judgment. True love to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

LETTER II.

To E. M. G.,

HER ELDEST SISTER.

March 8th, 1817.

"THERE are many devices in the heart of man, but the counsel of the Lord, *that shall stand*." May you bind this sweet motto around your heart, and may it prove a girdle of as much strength and comfort to

you, through grace, as it has proved to me. Our sea is indeed boisterous at this moment, but Jesus is not asleep; behold, he that keepeth us can neither slumber nor sleep; he has set bounds to the waves, which they cannot pass; and the storm, under his skilful guidance, shall waft us more speedily to the haven where we would be. Blessed, unspeakably blessed haven! It is the bosom of our beloved, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. I stand in amazement at myself, or, I should say, at that wondrous arm, which so supports me, and helps me to walk upon this tempestuous sea, so unmoved. The way is indeed rough; but the compassionate Father has supplied his poor prodigal with sandals of iron and brass, and in spite of sinking nature, I will, I do believe, that strength shall be proportioned to the most trying day of my pilgrimage. But why distress and weary my E—— with projects, which one breath of the Almighty can disperse in a moment? Who shall make one arrangement on earth, which has not passed the courts above and received the sanction of that faithful, covenant-keeping God, who is engaged to make all things work together for our good?

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

October 17th, 1817.

I AM afraid it is a long time since I wrote to you ; but for some little time past I have been in close attendance on our beloved C——h,* and now am called upon to ask you to rejoice with us in the blessed event of her having reached the land, where the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick. It would have rejoiced you, could you have seen her welcoming her Bridegroom: her sweet composure and firm trust were really glorious. Taken worse on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, we watched beside her, while every deepened breath sounded like the unbarring of her prison doors, every look spoke, " If ye love me, ye will rejoice." Tuesday, however, she revived a little: Wednesday, wonderfully better; said she had great rest in her soul, asked me to read parts of the Burial Service, which she enjoyed much; said, " ' This is my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased; '—ah! that is the sinner's hope, beloved in Christ." " Good bye. God bless you, love," were the last words I heard from this beloved friend. The *next* sounds I hear from her—oh, how glorious! Then, we shall both be blessed indeed! After a quiet night, her longing soul entered into the joy of her Lord this morning without a sigh. Sorrow

* The much-loved nurse referred to in a former letter.

and sighing shall be heard no more by her; the last tear is wiped away; the never-ending hallelujah is begun. Ah, angels! it is your turn now to rejoice; ye have borne away a jewel from this wilderness, and placed it in Jehovah's crown. Blessed Saviour, it is thine to rejoice, to see the travail of thy soul and to be satisfied. Holy Father! it is thine to rejoice, to rest in thy love and rejoice over her with joy and singing. Ransomed sinner, it is thine to rejoice, to rest in the bosom of thy Beloved, and drink rivers of pleasures for evermore! and shall it be ours to mourn? forbid it, Lord, forbid the selfish sorrow. Oh, help us to praise thee! help us to love thee, whilst we behold a weary pilgrim entering that mansion of rest, which her soul desired. O make it another tie to keep our affections in heaven, another veil drawn over the allurements of this world! She will be buried, God willing, on Wednesday, my birth-day. You were a means of breaking a strong link for me on that day last year. My God will loose another this year; how tenderly he deals with me, how solicitously he allures my love! ah, Lord, what is there in my wretched heart worth thy love, worth thy regard! *Because* he has set his love upon me, therefore, with everlasting kindness, he draws me to himself. I want myself, I want every one who knows our precious Saviour, to trust him more; well, well does he deserve our most unlimited trust. I have found him so faithful, so tender, so constantly remembering whereof I am made, so exactly weighing every mountain of difficulty in scales; what could have been done more that he hath not done for me? when, when

shall I learn to trust him as I ought? he is indeed a *tried* stone; the more we lean on him, the more we shall find his power and willingness to support us. We break our earthly props by leaning too much on them. Thus, when he has taught you that in him ALL fulness dwells, that he can be better to you than ten thousand earthly friends; when he has made a heart, too much, perhaps, cleaving to the dust, more his own; when the good Physician has sufficiently lowered you, and made you like a weaned child, he will give you your heart's desire, and restore you your loved friends, when your friends will not rob you of your simple leaning on himself. Do you not think that it is thus? Do you not think that it is in *very faithfulness* the Lord has caused you this affliction? It shall accomplish that whereunto he has sent it. But oh how he waits, how he longs to be gracious! he *delighteth* in mercy! My health is quite restored. I desire to go, and to be, where I can spend it most entirely for the Lord. As yet a door is opened here, a great door and effectual, and of course there are many adversaries. Blessed be God, I have not a care, except it be the fear of ever harbouring one, and thus being ungrateful to the tenderest of friends. I am very angry with you, dearest, for being low, because you do not experience such joy in your soul. Is it our joys, our gifts, our frames, that are to save us? are you not as complete in Christ without them? Must we put a patch of our filthy rags on that spotless robe? It is more difficult to lay these *good frames* at the foot of the cross, than to leave our vilest sins there.

When they dim the single eye to Jesus, they are to be dreaded, rather than desired. Count up what the Lord has done for you; begin, if you will, before the foundations of the world were laid; and when you have completed the reckoning of his mercies and free gifts, murmur against him for withholding from you what he has bestowed on some. Then, I am sure, eternity would not find room for *one* murmur.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Sept. 25th, 1818.

I REJOICE that your pen has once more found its way to the paper; though I should rejoice more, if it could inform me that my F——a had the joy of her Lord for her strength, instead of the spirit of heaviness, to lay her open to the assaults of the enemy.

“Yet am I help’d on this to dwell,
My Jesus doeth all things well.”

I endeavour to believe there is a needs-be for this heaviness, though, as you value the glory of God, I charge you struggle and fight against it. I think I have found something *fascinating* in that state; does this sound strange? perhaps you have never felt it. But I have had moments when I could almost have

liked to take up the character of the mourner as something easier; something which excused me from encountering the heat of the battle, screened me from many a cross, and excused me from many a duty. How would Satan have triumphed, had not bounds been set to these his frightful inroads on my soul; how would my God have been dishonoured, and many of his children stumbled! Praised be his name! when the enemy has thus come in like a flood, his Spirit has lifted up a standard against him. May he do the same for you, for surely I may say of your discouraging doubts and fears, an enemy hath done this.
 I have great reason to be thankful for this dispensation, painful as I have found it. It has kept me, I trust, from being exalted above measure, with the gifts and talents committed to me; it has kept me clinging and hanging upon my Rock and my Strength; it has weaned me from a vineyard, where too rich a present crop might have ensnared my heart; it has reminded me of what I too often forget, that I am but an earthen vessel; and I hope, through grace, to be enabled to glory in my infirmities, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Oct. 12th, 1818.

SINCE you cannot have me, I must pour out a little of my heart to you on paper, as often as I think I may, and hold some little communion with you during our short journey. When we get to the end we shall have time enough, yea, eternity enough, to speak of the Lord's dealings of love towards our souls; to admire every step of the way, even the steps we took in separate paths; and, blessed thought, in our eternity of communion, we shall not find one moment to fritter away in idle vain words; not one inclination of heart to turn aside from the alone worthy theme; no faltering tongue, no languid soul! Oh, might we anticipate such a meeting at the expiration of a thousand years, with all that was trying and dark included in those thousand years; if we were correct accountants, we should not reckon them worthy to be compared with this eternity of bliss. But surely in the little, little speck which now lies between—a speck whose every cloud is so gilded, and which is so irradiated by the shadow of that glorious union we are soon to enjoy, our hearts might forget that we had any thing to do but to rejoice; angels might wonder where we could find cause for heaviness. What do you mean, when you say you shall not see me? Supposing your vilest sister should obtain a higher

place, (what an idea!) will there be a schism in the glorified body? will there be disunion between the stones of that lovely temple? will not all the temple rejoice together? Shall the foot be insensible of the glory and joy of the head? and will the head say to the foot, I have no need of thee? shall the meanest saint see the *King* in his beauty, and hold communion with him, and shall a *saint* be too bright for him to gaze upon, too high for him to hold converse with? Next to the closest union with Jesus, I know not a joy of heaven on which to dwell with much greater delight, than the close union of members. Again and again, I am driven to say, "O Lord, I know not what to do, but mine eyes are unto thee." Blessed be God, let me contemplate what trials or circumstances I will, nothing seems to have any thing distressing or alarming in it, excepting what has the least appearance of evil, or a likelihood of grieving my Lord; and I think I may say, no plan of earthly comfort or enjoyment appears desirable, if deprived of the light of God's countenance. I can and do say, (though I confess my old heart would often unsay it,) do with me what thou wilt, so as thou wilt make me more one with thyself, more conformed to thy image, more formed for thy glory. . . . I can only testify that mercy and love have been stamped on every moment of the last half year. I believe I am very delicate in body; I know not what it is; perhaps it may be spiritual languor only; but you would hardly imagine how unequal I feel to every thing at times, how sweet the clods of the valley would be to me. I

hope I do struggle against it; I hope it is not sinful; when I tell my Lord of it, he seems to say, with tender compassion, that he knoweth whereof I am made, and remembereth that I am but dust; that there is a need be for it, and that he orders it thus, that the glory of his power may be more displayed. Praised be his name, the seal of the Spirit, the earnest of my future inheritance, has not been veiled from mine eyes; though faint, I have been enabled still to pursue; my Captain has not left me behind, but still honours me with a place in his regiment, puts his sword sometimes into my hand, nerves my weak arm, covers my head in the battle, and gives me to put my feet upon the head of some mighty kings. Oh, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, when it can no longer proclaim, "Jesus doeth all things well:"

LETTERS TO C.M.P., HER NIECE AND GOD-DAUGHTER.

LETTER I.

C—n, March 27th, 1837.

How very kind of you to spend one thought upon poor me! still more so, many stitches. Your dear

purse will be with me a purse to be much remembered; not only for the loved giver's sake, but for the day of clouds and gloominess in which it came to me. My mourning eyes could see nothing in it but a mourning purse, or rather, I should say, the blending of the earthly and the heavenly colours, one so dark, and the other so cheerily blue; I could almost have thought you had dipped your silks into my very heart. But soon, very soon, shades and shadows will flee away. Here it is well, it is needful, that a deep shade should be placed beside each brilliant colour; God, who cannot err, hath set one over against the other—the weak eyes of our weak hearts need it; there, at home, with untiring gaze, and unendangered heart, we shall gaze on him who is the concentration of all that is brilliant, all that is lovely, and need no shade for ever. You will smile at my weakness, dearest C——, and if ever a very bright day should dawn upon me in the wilderness, I shall perhaps smile, I think, that even your *very* pretty purse called forth so many tears; but such a heavy cloud seems to hang over this once extremely brilliant spot, that every thing appears to me in a new light. But I would hope and pray that it may be that light in which I may take a more sober view of things that are seen, and things that are not seen. I have already discovered many mistakes which I have made when dazzled with sunshine, and can read more legibly engraven on every object, “One thing is needful.” Still, my gentle Teacher is most patient; I can feel how he feels for me, and makes me willing to learn, though in the

midst of tears, and I am sure that he is not teaching me one useless lesson. May you love him in every corner of your heart, and every drop of your blood, and be able to sum up your every desire for yourself and your beloved ones in, "Father, glorify thy name."

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

May, 1837.

TRULY do I thank you, my beloved child, for all your tender love and the many stitches you bestow upon me; and much do I value your presents. I think I was much more unhappy when your former one arrived; it was a useful harbinger, and many were the tears I shed over it. *Now* I can look at my *black* bag with smiles; it is well for ever with one I so dearly loved, and from whom I had scarcely known a separation from earliest childhood; and never did I feel less separated from her than now. I seem to have the privilege of doing her work, while she for ever rests; I would not have her back to poor Martha's kitchen world for any thing; I seem to hear her call to me from her sweet resting-place, "One thing is needful;" and this golden thread guides me through all the intricacies of my new and solemn duties. And do you think you could bear to come here, and find her gone?

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, May 20th, 1837.

MY DEAREST C——, I must thank you for writing such an interesting note to me. I love to know what is going on in your precious soul, for I believe it is the work of the hands of a cunning workman; and that which he secretly fashions in the lowest parts of the earth, shall be brought forth to the praise and glory of the wondrous Potter, and shall display to admiring worlds the manifold wisdom of God. You speak of your earnest desire, my child, to bring forth fruit, and your disappointment that you do not find the fruit you desire. Do you quarrel with the lovely bursting buds, because they are not fruit? Are they not fruit in embryo? Do they not tell of life in the tree, and of fruit in due season? Nor is it only what man sees, admires, and tastes, that is fruit. Some of the most choice and precious are laid up for the owner of the garden, and are seen and prized by him only. "Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat *his* pleasant fruits." If you are learning to put *no* confidence in the flesh—to abhor yourself—to become a fool—to write vanity on all creature good, these are not certainly showy accomplishments, but they are absolutely requisite in the education of all who are to ~~take~~ a part in the last grand chorus, "Worthy is the

Lamb," &c. May you and I be getting into better tune for that blessed song, and may a change of world be no change of the key-note with us.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Dec. 2, 1837.

I do not like to let a day pass, my beloved child, without thanking you for your satisfactory note. I have been so long accustomed to watch over every symptom of spiritual diseases in others, especially in the young, and to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all authority, that I fear I was too profuse in my scoldings of you; yet I do not repent that you are made sorry, seeing that it was, I trust, after a godly sort, and you kindly give me credit for acting only from "anxiety for your best interests." I *could* not, nay, I *would* not disguise from you, that I saw much in you that pained me, inasmuch as it led me to fear that you had not received that first precious gift which manifests, "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine," I mean, the gift of a contrite, a broken spirit. Oh, my child, rest not short of that, as you dread resting short of heaven at last; and, I am sure I may add, of any heaven here. All *stubbornness*, which is *idolatry*, all pride of opinion, of intellect, &c. &c., *must* come down, in judgment or in mercy. We have this morning finished Judges, an

have been much struck by the repeated disclosure of the secret of all Israel's sin and misery, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This is exactly what old nature likes, and what new nature puts a cross upon at every turn. "Even Christ pleased not himself." If I am spared to see you again, my child, may I see more of this mind in you, and very, very much more in my own most wanting self. I have long thought little or nothing, or worse than nothing, of religious talk and sentimental correspondence; I am too old to be caught by tinkling cymbals; let me eat the fruit, and I will tell the tree what it is, without its saying one word to me.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Jan. 6th, 1838.

.... I HAVE a particular dislike to birth-day letters, and find my spirit particularly straitened when I would write one; but I will give you seven words to think upon at odd times, in this fresh stage of your little pilgrimage. They have been the means with me of running through a troop, leaping over a wall, dispersing mists, pointing out the way, stilling the raging of the sea, turning hurry into composure, anxiety into calm, uncertainty into assurance, perplexity into boldness, and littleness into dignity. "STUDY to show

THYSELF *approved* unto GOD." The Lord breathe them powerfully into your very soul, my child, and you shall walk as a child of the Most High, and your peace shall flow in as a river. Oh that it were indeed MY STUDY, my only study in every study, my simple aim in EVERY thing! The little I have been enabled to try of it is so extremely sweet, and soothing, and elevating, and invigorating; and all that is spent to any other end is so greatly misspent. It will do for a spur, a bit, a bridle, a pillow, or a feast.

The Lord open to you his good treasure, my loved child.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

1838.

IF my mind could forget you, my body could not, for you are an every hour comfort to it; and when I put on my warm, soft shoes, I frequently pray that your dear feet may be shod with iron and brass, and that from no earthly manufactory, and from no human hands. Your Guide knew well the way, when he prepared such shoes for you; and he meant you to expect something rather rough: but did you not hear him say, "Fear not, thou worm?" He is no mocker; the shoes tell you this; then hesitate not to trust him when he speaks comfortably. But "am I his?" My child, I cannot answer that; we need very clear marks from

the Shepherd's own hand; he marks particularly the ear and the foot of his sheep. (Lev. viii. 23, 24.) Examine thyself. Be not satisfied with slight marks; they will not be visible when pain and sickness dim the eye, and another cannot see *for* you. Then, be *diligent* to make your calling and election *sure*.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

January 7th, 1839.

I FORGOT that your birth-day letter ought to go to-morrow, and was intending to wait. . . . Now it is very late, and I am more than usually tired. But it has just occurred to me, how you will need every little thimble-full of comfort on your birth-day, this first time of missing that lovely golden vessel. Oh, how too, too well I can sympathize with you! Earnestly would I pray that you may more than ever realize our God to be the God of ALL comfort; that all the vessels of the sanctuary are hung upon him; and that if he has placed your choicest one in his pavilion, there is no restraint with him: he can give you a refreshing draught, even from the jaw-bone of an ass. There is but one thing, my child, that can rob you indeed; and if the consolations of God are small with you, let that secret thing be diligently

searched for. New duties and new snares surround you ; but "He giveth *more* grace." May it be *multiplied* unto you in this opening year ; and who can tell what grace, mercy, and peace must be, when multiplied by an infinite God ! No fear but the little cup must be filled to overflowing.

I shall endeavour to write to some one of your dear party in a day or two.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

April 27th, 1839.

THANK you much, my beloved child, for your interesting note. We have doubtless all had our *multitude* of thoughts within us, for ourselves and for each other, as we have dragged through the solemn anniversaries ; but I trust we could each of us add, "Thy comforts *DELIGHT* my soul." And, while we tasted the sweetness of the drops, and found our eyes lightened with this "little honey on the end of a rod," (1 Sám. xiv. 27,) have we not joyed to think of our blessed ones drinking full draughts of the river of HIS pleasures for evermore ?

How your precious Father is honoured in the forefront of the battle ! . . . Are your feet shod yet, my beloved child ? Oh, what tender feet are nature's !

Mineing and tripping; wishing for well-mown lawns and flowery meads; shrinking from every bit of road that would make old self feel, though it be well marked with the footsteps of the flock—but oh, how safe and happy! May this be your path, my love; and then you will go, not from weakness to weakness, as most travellers do, but from strength to strength.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

January 7th, 1840.

Yor ask me to write you a birth-day letter, my beloved child, "*because* you know I particularly dislike it;" and it is for this very reason I have placed it upon the list "of things to be done." Oh that we may know more and more *how* to live. Study John xii. 25. It is a strong, sharp axe at the root of old self; as fast as the hydra sprouts, it comes with a "not I," "not as I will;" and then, heavier still, "He that *hateth* his life," &c. Ah, my child! the ramifications of this into all the *littles* of every hour, make up true life; and then the quiet study of that precious Pattern, "Even Christ pleased **NOT** himself!" Fasten the eyes of your soul there, and you will almost unconsciously be transformed into the same image, and get such a sip of real life, as will make you earnestly thirst for more. Would that

in speaking of this, I could say, "We speak that we do know." Alas, were I to put together all the few and far between minutes of *this* life, you would not find me yet one year old. How old art thou, my child? How my very heart yearns to hear that you live, yet **NOT you** : how is this to be? "Abide in **ME**." Try no other way, though it promise ever so fair.

"Closer and closer may we cleave
To his beloved embrace,
Expect his fulness to receive,
And grace to answer grace."

Yes, my child, you are leaving one school-room, but I trust it is only that you may enter with increased earnestness and delight into another, where few, very few, are privileged to enter; nor indeed can they, unless they become little, tiny babes; can bear to be accounted fools; can feel thankful for a place in the lowest class, and love their Teacher's frown better than the world's smiles. Happy children! Soon shall they have their Teacher's smile, and their sun shall no more go down.

My minutes are few, and my occupations very many. . . . I have not set you an easy task. The Lord teach your hands to war, and your every finger to fight.

LETTER X

TO THE SAME.

January 5th, 1842.

..... You furnish me with the softest slippers, my loved child, and I am wishing for you to be snod. O how different from *slipping on* easy shoes! I want you to have shoes that will bear rough roads and thorny paths; shoes that will *stand*. Yes, stand in the day of battle; or which is far more difficult, in the slippery places of ease and prosperity. You have much to *overcharge* your heart now, not so much for yourself as for others. "Take heed lest at ANY time your heart be overcharged, and so that day come upon you unawares."

I have twig upon twig, but I cannot call it of a *rod*, unless it is of Aaron's rod; in his precious hand it looks lovely.

LETTERS TO C. H. R.,

HER NEPHEW AND GODSON.

LETTER I.

C——n, Sept. 21, 1835.

MY DEAREST C——, How truly thankful I am that you have at length been able to break silence, and to

tell me plainly something of your past and present state of mind. I rejoice in it, not so much for the unspeakable comfort it has brought to my heart, but from the assurance of the comfort it will give to yours. One of Satan's strongest holds is a dumb spirit, both as it regards God and man; it is the offspring of pride, and often seeks and finds harbour under the borrowed name and garments of humility. May our dear Lord banish this dumb devil from our souls, enabling us to *pour out* our whole heart before him, and to experience fully Psalm xxxii. 5; and may it be our one object, through our little inch of time, our begun heaven, to tell how great things Jesus hath done for us, seeing that our most loving Father delights to hear his little ones lisping to one another, and will not let a word that he puts into their hearts, and draws from their lips, fall to the ground. Mal. iii. 16, 17.

Pleasant and lovely have you and dearest R—— ever been towards me, and often have I thought your love to me was wonderful; but, of course, the more abundantly I loved you in return, the more intense was my anxiety to be fully assured that Christ was formed in your hearts the hope of glory. I have sown many and bitter tears, but had they been ten thousand times so many, I think I should remember no more the anguish, for joy that those so dear to me are at length manifestly born of God. You will still say that I am too sanguine; but I am not quite ignorant of the devices of Satan, and I know that he is particularly fond of an "if;" nay, more, of "I have *no* hope." It has

often struck me that the temptations of our adorable Jesus, from which he so truly "*suffered*," were ushered in with an "If thou be the Son of God." O the impudence of the father of lies! O the many arrows that he has pointed with an "if!" but do you think he ever troubles his own children with one? I trow not. . . . I love you too well willingly to mislead you with false hopes, but my dear Master always charges me so not to despise the day of small things, that I know I should grieve him if I said any thing to discourage you. Look at the smoking flax, how disagreeable to eyes and nose; man would turn away from it; but there is a spark from the altar of God, and one like unto the Son of God is stooping with inexpressible tenderness over the despised flax; and see, he every now and then fans it with his own breath—the breath of love: he screens it from every rude gale of the wilderness, which would fain extinguish it; he shelters it from the many waters that would drown it; and, by and bye, the flame bursts forth, giving light and heat to all around. And shall not that which is so precious to my God be precious to me? It appears a very peculiar mercy that the season of confirmation is appointed as a means, I do believe with many, of bringing the soul to a point; and where a soul has been wavering, I doubt not it is a time when the *Lord* confirms that soul. O how gloriously is the prey then taken from the mighty, and the poor captive delivered; then is the astonished soul enabled to "know and believe the love that God hath to it."

There is the secret of heart-warming—not from the poor little sparks of your own kindling—no, nor even of God's kindling within you; for even these are scarcely to be found in the most loving hearts in some hours of darkness; but from just believing the love that God hath towards us; and you cannot please him better than by the fullest assurance of it, for he “taketh pleasure in those that *hope in his mercy* ;” and while you give him credit for “resting in his love,” you will find your own love grow so exceedingly, that you will have no room to question whether you love him or not. Remember, when you see God as a hard master, it is a god of Satan's dressing up. Do but just see what he has been to you from your youth up. From your infancy, indeed I may say, before you had your being, you were the children of many prayers; so tenderly watched over in mind, body, and estate, every step of your little pilgrimage; and now with the mercy of mercies of being taught to feel the plague of your own heart, your own sickness, and your own sore. You may well take up the argument of Manoah's wife, and say, “If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us such things as these.” No, if ever he says, “*I wound*,” he will add, “and *I heal* ;” if ever he strips off the filthy garments, it is to clothe with change of raiment, and to put a fair mitre upon the head.

..... Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you *faultless* before the

presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to him do I most earnestly commend you, fully assured that he is willing, as he is able, to keep that which I have committed unto him.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, April 16th, 1836.

. . . . THIS new moon seems to have brought in delicious weather. D—— (the gardener) is intensely busy; how amused you would have been to hear him go on yesterday over "a worm at the root." . . . He began rooting up a sickly-looking tulip; I was for his giving over; but "for certain there's *something* here:" at length not finding any thing around it, he pulled off a bit of the brown shell outside the bulb, and still seeing nothing, as he pushed it about in his hand, he said, "If we had but a microscope, I lay we should see a many;" he had scarcely said it, when a piece which I had taken for a fibre began to move, and we discovered that it was a living wire worm not thicker than a hair. Well, D——, I said, this is a lesson indeed! What a sure but unseen enemy may be at the root; what need to have our hearts thoroughly searched through, &c. "Aye, but we're a better chance, as one may say, than these poor things—for they can't help themselves like. If the worm comes,

they must go." But I think we are pretty much like them, for our help stands in our head Gardener and Husbandman, who sees dangers and enemies that we have no idea of, and no power against. Now with all your care you can't see all the worms, but there is not one of our enemies hid from the Lord's sight.

As to ——— I should say, unless there is something decidedly favourable, the acquaintance had far better be dropped than kept up. The mixed multitude from Egypt were they who always led the Israelites into sin, and the sooner they are shaken off the happier and safer it is for Israel. We may think to do them good, and win them over, but our God, who sees the end from the beginning, has so clearly and solemnly pointed out our path of duty and safety on this head, that when we step out of it we do it at our peril, and return stripped and wounded to the camp of Israel. Few truths can be more plainly set forth in Scripture than this, and almost every pilgrim has set up some beacon to warn those who come after ; though, alas with too many, they will only learn by bitter experience.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, June, 1836.

. . . . I HARDLY feel willing to talk upon paper to you, it seems so stiff and cold ; yet, lest you should suspect

my heart of being cold, I fain would make paper testify again how warmly I love you, and how earnestly I desire that grace, mercy, and peace may be *multiplied* unto you: then you will be rich and happy indeed, and whatever your added days may bring in the way of providence, they must bring added blessings in the way of grace. *In the way* wherein you are to walk the enemy will be sure to lay plenty of snares for your feet; but greater is he that is in you; he shall make your feet like hinds' feet—able to tread safely over crags and precipices, yea, to leap over every difficulty, till you stand at last in “an even place.”

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, 1836.

I THOUGHT I would not indulge myself by writing to you this time, my dearest C——, we seem to have written so often; yet my heart bleats for a word with you, if that word is only “Jesus.” Don’t you love to think of him as the “*holy child* Jesus,” one just as old as you are now, knowing the thoughts, and feelings, and temptations of youth in all points, and yet immaculate; and now reckoning all that spotlessness of his youth to your account, so that he can always say of you, who have hid yourself in him, “Thou art all fair, my love, there is *no* spot in thee.” O it is such heart-breaking

love! Look for love in your own heart! O we get frozen while we are seeking this spark in these frozen regions; but look at what he tells you is in *his* heart towards you, and, while you are musing, the fire will kindle in your own soul, and, or ever you are aware, it will make you like the chariots of Amminadib, a willing one in the day of his power.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, August 23d, 1837.

I WAS counting upon a little bit of this wet afternoon to write to you, when your welcome letter arrived, and much do I thank you for it; for it has quieted the little anxious inquiry which was peeping out at a corner of my heart, "Lovest thou me?" O what anguish does that question stir, and yet how often do we, as it were, force it from our tenderest Friend; and if we dare to answer it in the affirmative, compel him to add, "Is *this* thy kindness to thy Friend? so little real delight in my company? so communicative with others, so shy and dumb with me? so retentive of every kind expression from others, so forgetful of mine? so eloquent and warm in praise of others, so dumb and cold in my praise?" What must his love be to burn so brightly and so steadily in the midst of so many waters!

LETTER TO THE REV. T. JONES.

C—n, Dec. 11, 1838.

It has not been without much and tender sympathy, my beloved pastor, that I have heard of your sufferings, and greatly do I rejoice to hear of any mitigation of them. Some of your hardest days' work, I take it, my dear shepherd, are experienced now; to stand in health and strength in a pulpit, cheered with the glow of affection and of spiritual appetite in the many dear faces around you, and to proclaim, with all the eloquence of a heart bubbling up with a good matter, "the things touching the king," especially his love in correcting and chastening—this is *one thing*. To be brought into the solitude of a sick chamber, shut out from creature excitement; the very avenues to earthly enjoyments for a time sealed up; the grasshopper a burden, and all beneath the sun miserable comforters; here to SIT STILL and KNOW that he is God—an all-sufficient Portion—the same God who once so lighted up all creation and girded them with gladness—*this is another thing*. This, my much-loved friend, you would tell me, is a far harder day's work than three full services on some of your former happy Sabbaths. But this is satisfactory work, inasmuch as it has more clearly the impress of the finger of God upon it. Satan is a better ape at active than at passive service; a Judas may preach and be very busy, but a Judas never sat down stripped

of all created good and said, "It is the Lord, let him do as it seemeth him good." When our natural powers fail, then does our Precious Prophet put his eyes upon our eyes, his mouth upon our mouth, his hands upon our hands, and make us understand a little what we mean, when we say "I live—yet *not* I, but Christ liveth in me." Oh blessed weakness that makes room for such strength! blessed blindness that makes use of such eyes! blessed helplessness that gets such hands to war for us, and such fingers to fight our battles! Nor have you ceased to preach, my beloved pastor; your very sufferings preach—yea, I think they have sounded louder in my heart than your dear voice did. When Mrs. C. R—— declared that "our good old gentleman had broken the drum of her ear," I think you would have replied to her as Theophilus Jones did to a lady who made a similar complaint, "I assure you I *aimed* at the *heart*, and am sorry to find I only hit the *head*."

We have some rich feasts under dear Mr. —— now; he told us the other evening, when lecturing in the school-room, not to think that the age of miracles was gone by; "Behold," said he, "the dead sinner called out of the grave of corruption; behold the traveller to hell arrested in his course; every desire of his soul turned exactly the contrary way, forsaking the companions whom he loved, and seeking the company of those whom he formerly hated and despised; behold the man's whole soul cleaving to the God with whom, a short time since, he was in bitter enmity; and will you tell me that miracles have ceased? I say, calling a *corps* out"

of a grave is nothing to this." Ah! and well might *we* say so, as we gazed upon and listened to this very man standing in his little desk of bare wood, without any gown or form, but anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, earnestly contending for the faith which such a short time since he as earnestly endeavoured to destroy. Who can say the many miracles which have been performed in this one case!

We are expecting our two college lads this week, and our two schoolboys next, and then our dear nine will, if God permit, be round our table again, all olive branches—some manifesting sap in them. Dear little Samuel is *very* small, but very cheerful, and, for a teething baby, in good health and spirits. Your play-mate is as full of fun as ever. When she bid her papa good night last night, he said, "My dear child, when do you ever keep still? I should *hardly* think you do even in bed." "Oh dear no, papa; Miss S—— often has to HOLD me in there, or I should be out."

How I have filled my paper, but not emptied my heart. Oh, how I long to see and hear you. Your own very loving, grateful

HELEN.

LETTERS TO MRS. J. F. C.

LETTER I.

June 4th, 1829.

A LITTLE bit from one under much the same dispensation as yourself, my loved sister, may be acceptable to you, and therefore I will make an effort to push the pen along the paper. We are both laid by, at a season when we expected to be very busy, and when my vain heart fancied I could be of some use to Omnipotence. And now he has put his silly child to bed, and bid her lie quite still; but truly it is only to manifest more of his tenderness and faithfulness, to show how soft his gentle hand can make a hard bed; how he can be the health of the countenance, in the midst of disease and languor. But now, my naughty sister, don't you begin to say, "Oh that it were so with me!" I have no particular raptures, no frames, no feelings to tell you of, only increasing helplessness and emptiness, and frequent utter inability to pray or praise. Wherefore? To make me *live* upon in sickness, what I could *talk* of in health, the finished work of *my* Jesus; mine, because just suited to me, and just glorified in such a vile, empty nothing as I am; *your* Jesus, my beloved Caroline, assuredly yours; for never man, nor devil, taught you what you know of yourself; never an unrenowned heart could say, what you can say, "Just the Saviour I need."

Well, if you can never here say, "He is mine," there are many who can joyfully say it for you, and who well know that "more happy, though *not* more secure, are the glorified spirits in heaven." I have been enjoying with an eye to you this morning, "Lord, she whom *thou* lovest is sick." Sweet plea! and the strange, but often sure proof of love, so different from what *man* would say and act, as manifested in the sixth verse; *our* "therefore" would have been all bustle to see and relieve; but this is a heavy golden hinge with our Jesus; a "therefore" so weighty with the thoughts of peace and love, that it moveth not as man moveth. It is the therefore that delays health and a cure to you and me; a therefore which we would not exchange for all the health and strength that could be given us by any by-means.

My head bids me leave off, and I fear I shall only have perplexed you with my scrawl, but if it tend to re-assure your heart of my faithful love, you will, I know, excuse the rest. Remember me very affectionately to your dear friends. You have all overwhelmed us with your magnificent contributions. The Lord reward you all a hundred-fold into your bosoms!

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

May 17th, 1831.

THE Record has, within the last half-hour, conveyed to us, intelligence which has wrung our hearts with

anguish for you ; and, in the midst of many engagements, I seem to have no heart, or head, or hands, but for you ; and yet, perhaps, I am indulging my own feelings at the expense of yours, for letters at such seasons are often worrying ; yet to be assured of the very sincere and prayerful sympathy of friends, we have found refreshing, and as drops of consolation from the *God of all comfort*. Be assured of our very deep sympathy with you, my beloved friends.

.... It was with difficulty, or rather I am afraid I must say, unwillingness, that we were brought to believe that your lovely little plant was thus early transplanted. Sweet child ! I had often said it did not look as if intended for a long sojourn in the wilderness. Oh, that your very souls and bleeding hearts may love and praise the loving arm which has early gathered the precious lamb ; and, while you hear him, in sweetest accents, saying, Suffer the little infant to come unto me, may you joyfully say, Amen, even so, Lord Jesus.

I may now indeed congratulate you ; you are honoured parents of a joint heir with Christ ; but my heart seems to feel your every feeling ; and to anticipate for you the Marah return to poor dear Spratton. Those shrubs that the sweet love appeared to take such interest in seeing planted. Ah ! you moved them to a choice spot. With care your God has now done the same with your pleasant plant. May you never look at them but to praise afresh !

.... I shall want more than ever to see you and be near you ; but it is all well. *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth.*

We are all, through tender mercy, well. During the last half hour I have peculiarly felt, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." But it is all love, can be nothing else;—oh, how vile the doubt.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

July, 1831.

HAD I not expected some earlier opportunity, my beloved sister, of writing to you by private means, I must sooner have thanked you for your very kind and interesting letter. It is sweet to me to hear you sing of mercy and judgment, and I would fain echo every note; for who should louder sing than I? Your justly admired Rutherford tells me not to throw away the rod as an old useless bill, that is only for the fire, but rather look it in the face seven times, and read over and over again the message of the Lord upon it; and truly, when it is laid up in the temple, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary—when the eyes of nature are shut, and those of grace wide open—the rod manifests new beauties every time I look at it; it blossoms, and buds, and yields abundant fruit; it tells of such love, such faithfulness, such tenderness, such gentleness, such firmness, such wisdom, that the handiwork of the Father of all mercies, the compassions of him

who loved me and gave himself for me, are exhibited in every twig of it. I wonder, I admire, I adore ; but still the abiding impression of my poor weak nature is, " My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." Ah, how deeply I felt that when I last wrote to you ! How every thing within my coward heart and conscious soul said, " Your turn must come next !" But oh the mercy, that I did not know from one hour to another, nay, from one minute to another, what the next would bring forth ; that the mountains were laid upon me by grains, as the three parts crushed worm was enabled to bear them !

. . . . I *have* loved you, my dear sister ; I do love you, and through rich, rich grace I shall love you for ever, and be for ever with you, and with him who hath taught us to love one another. Oh, the dust of the wilderness ! how it gets into our eyes, and makes us so dim-sighted, so blind to that near and dear home which lies just before us ! But I dare say you are often gazing upon it now, and following your blessed child from rapture to rapture, casting his soon-obtained but dearly-bought crown at his good Shepherd's feet. Sweet child ! he ever appeared to me too sweet for earth, and only fit to be in his Saviour's bosom ; and he who walks his garden to gather his lilies, could not overlook this early but full-blown one. Honoured parents ! you hoped to train your loved child for glory ; it is his to train, to draw you on. May the attraction grow stronger and stronger, till you are ever with him—not the attraction of the sweet flower, but of him who made it sweet, and has now

concentrated it in his own sweetness, that perfume which fills the whole heaven.

I was rebuked by Psalm lxxiii. 25, at a time when I was indulging *creature* attraction in heavenly places, when he whom I most tenderly loved was removed thither, and I thought I might lawfully let my whole heart go forth in creature love to one who was where nothing can defile. But "whom have I in *heaven* but *thee*?" put a check upon my idolatrous heart, and set me a little on my guard against its evils and its depths.

.... Forgive my tired hand, my loved friend, and believe the warmth of heart with which you are loved.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Sept. 1831.

MY heart is so full when I think of you and all connected with you, that I quite shrink from such a medium as a goose's quill for giving it vent; and, like a child of Eve, almost quarrel with the tender mercy I might enjoy, because it is not all I seem to want. But truly, your quill conveyed some sweet things to me, my loved friend, and proved a channel of refreshment to several. I did love your dear Father very peculiarly; how foolish of me to put in the

past tense; do I love him less, now that he is perfectly lovely, altogether like his Lord? Oh no! but I loved him so, as the cheerful, affectionate, sympathizing pilgrim, as such a very lovely, and sweet lily among the thorns of the wilderness; as such, I shall know him, I shall enjoy him no more. The full blown lily is gathered, and is in a bosom which no thorn ever approaches. Those sweet little sentences you so kindly sent me quite brought him before me, just the same dear happy believer, giving his beloved LORD full credit, putting off his armour only to put on his full court-dress. It makes the little toiling bark long sore for the haven, when it sees a gallant vessel entering in such full sail; how soon united to his beloved grandchild, now vicing with each other, which shall praise loudest!

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

June 12th, 1832.

You excuse me, but I do not excuse myself; there ought not to have been any apparent decline of interest in dear S—— friends, therefore, in neglecting to write sooner, I neglected a plain duty, and had I consulted my infallible Counsellor, I should have found space for this, even though it were at the expense of some fresh duty which had occupied its place. Oh, my dear

fellow-labourer, do you not often find a perplexity in the fitting in of duties? I spoil much work, and turn right into wrong, by putting it in its wrong place. I have known some importunate avocations endeavour, with a wry, innocent face and plausible tongue, to push into the inch of time set apart for prayer or searching the Scriptures, aye, and to my shame and loss, I must confess, I have known them succeed and make a show of much done when it has been at the cost of the best things left undone. I do marvel at the patience which bears with such a servant and with such services. The stifled voice of duty would scarcely now, I fear, have been heard in my busy bustle, had not a neglected cold at length forced me into my room and seated me at my desk; and now my poor body is almost crying out for bed, and grumbling at the fatigue of pushing a pen from one side of the sheet to the other.

.... Excuse the stupid production of a very heavy head. The desire of a man is his kindness, and it was my *desire* to write you a nice long letter, but it is not in me. Open your mouths wide for your Bible Meetings and they shall be filled, Psalm cxvi. 1st.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

March 7th, 1833.

It seems a long time since I talked with you, my loved sister, though few days pass without our talking of you. . . . You have long most kindly and affectionately sympathized with us in our joys and sorrows, and when I thought you were not sympathizing with us, from not knowing our circumstances, I have felt as if my body were naimed, and I wanted some important members to minister to me. . . . Surely we are now come to another place in our pilgrimage for fining gold. Our beloved M——, whom we had hoped to see this spring in renewed health; is—what must I say? Oh! she is leaning on the bosom of Jesus; but whether on earth or in heaven, I know not. . . . Her dear husband says she takes every opportunity of sweetly and calmly trying to persuade him to be willing to let her flee away and be at rest, and she added a few lines in this strain, at the end of one of his letters to our dear mother. She spoke also of the stability and height of *the rock* in the midst of Jordan's rolling stream, in a strain which ought to have turned our very groans into loudest praises.

Short, however, as has been her stay at D——, it has not been meteor-like; but as a faithful star, she has been the honoured instrument of guiding many a one to the incarnate God; and, I believe, should she be

taken, she will still, as it were, stand over the place pointing to him. . . .

But now let me sing of mercy, as well as of judgment, and now I enter upon an eternal song, and in vain seek for a beginning or an end. Our God had, indeed, purposes of love for many precious souls, when the command came to us in our S—— nest, "Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the Mount of the Amorites. . . . Behold, I have set the land before you: certainly I will be with you." We heard a little of the blessed message, and but little, for the bleatings and lowings of nature: we did expect a blessing, but we have had such an abundant one poured out that we had not room enough, in our utmost expectations, to receive it, and have stood overwhelmed. . . . But the north wind must blow upon the garden, as well as the south; the proud blossoms must be checked, and the doubtful ones taken off; the search will soon be made, "Who can stand before his cold?"

. . . . I am still much of an invalid, and taught to make much of the blessed privilege of an hour's labour in the vineyard; but I have not yet learned to be cheerfully ready to be laid by, so I must expect to be over this very difficult lesson some time yet.

. . . . Distribute my true love to any to whom I may not be able to write it, and accept much for yourselves.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

January 18th, 1834.

.... You will have concluded by this time, that my harp is hung upon the willows; but it is soon down again, for the chief Musician bids me make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob; yea, this is even a statute in Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob; and I am bound to declare that my God has written his every law upon my mind and my heart with his own omnipotent finger, and his work standeth fast for ever. Praise thee! yea, precious, precious Lord! though I should never see the fig-tree blossom, nor any show of fruit in the vines. I will praise thee for winter; for that is thine, and therefore very good. I will praise thee for night, for that is also thine; and because thine, it is mine—mine to work for my good; yea, so mine, that it brings round an everlasting morning; so thine, that, because thou art with me, the night shineth as the day. Oh! I hope I have said nothing that appears like complaining of my unspeakably tender, infinitely wise Husband. The LORD forgive the vile thought of my heart, if it found a moment's lodging there.

My chief reason for addressing you to-day, is to assure you and my dear brother of the sincere readiness with which I comply with your kind request that I should be sponsor for your darling child. I have taken her to our beloved LORD for his blessing,

nothing doubting but I shall enjoy the privilege of assisting in the more solemn and peculiar surrender of her into his dear hands; and it is with few parents I can enjoy this privilege. I dare not go with an Ananias or Sapphira, or with the more common character of an Eli. I must go with a Hannah, or not at all; *no reserve*; nothing kept for Egypt, nor trained for Egypt. With you and Mr. C—— I can *most cheerfully* present her to the Lord; and that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, heartily embraces the dear child as a precious member of Christ, quite sure that we *have* the petitions we desire of him. I should like, if possible, to know the day and hour when you propose to present her, that I may more peculiarly be with you in spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

.... Beloved C——! the joyous day of her espousals seems drawing nigh. May her friends, who, as yet, for a little while, stand without, and hear but the sound of music and dancing at a distance, rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. How will he love and cherish her! how will he "cheer up" his bride, not for a year, but for ever! Accept my best love; dispense much to the many friends whom I have not time to enumerate; and ever praise, and, for a season, pray for ——, &c.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

January 30th, 1836.

WHEN first I received your kind letter and acceptable presents; my loved friends, I thought many days would not pass ere I thanked you and cozed with you; and, did I not know too well how often I deceive myself, and prove false to many a right purpose, I should indeed be surprised to find that more than a month had stretched its full length between the willing and the doing. A true but melancholy sample this of my life. Oh that heaven, where his servants *shall* serve him; when willing will be doing, and doing will be willing; when we shall never again have to look for the far off "how to perform;" when it will be ever present, and that for ever! when a spiritual body shall be a helpmeet for a soul, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

You ask me, my dear sister, "Why is it that the children of many godly parents do not turn out as dear Mr. R——'s?" And you then, in great measure, make answer to yourself, by adding, "In my case, I know I do not ask without wavering." Ah, my friend! I am thankful to find that you do not charge God foolishly, or attribute unfaithfulness to him. Here is one fruitful source of incalculable evil, "staggering at the promises." But must I add, that, while some expect too little, others expect too much; that is, they

expect the promises to flow down in a channel through which God has declared they shall not flow, and look for mercy, where they have a right only to look for judgment. When I see parents honouring their children more than God; consulting their wills instead of his; and seeking their pleasure more than his honour; I see indeed a promise for them, but it is one the bare whisper of which should make both our ears to tingle; "they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." This at once unties every knot, unravels every tangle in the dismal histories of our Elia and Davids, and ever stands as a monument of the faithfulness of him whose name is *Jealous*. In some cases, indeed, mercy rejoices over judgment; and having used the child as a smart rod for the foolish parent, the Lord at length causes it to bud and blossom, and bear fruit; but there is frequently a want of mellowness about such fruit, which seems to point at a better pruned tree, and to say, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."

If there is one point which I peculiarly aim at in the training of children, for giving a right tone to the mind, it is this, "Not answering again;" but I would earnestly look to be first well drilled in this, in my heavenly Father's school, meekly taking every command with a "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Thus receiving the law at his mouth, I would speak to my child as one having authority, not suffering room for the shadow of a thought that such authority might be for one moment disputed, or giving a crevice to that abomination of the present day, "The child shall be-

have himself proudly against the ancient." The summary of perfect filial obedience was once, and only once, exemplified; and in how few words is it comprised! "was subject unto them." Oh that I may hear this of my precious little godchild! Not kept under by a threatening, which only provokes to wrath, nor yielding a cringing body to conceal an unyielding mind; but the steady, cheerful subjection of a well-trained soul, happy in complying with what it has never once questioned the wisdom of. I know few duties which call for such hourly self-denial as those of a parent. The strong yearnings of nature plead powerfully, and cry of this and the other indulgence, "Is it not a little one?" I can scarcely tell you the pain I have felt sometimes, in denying only a cake to a child, especially when the loveliness of not answering again has drawn forth all my love; but, having once convinced them that it is love which withholds it, I am always well repaid in getting a great interest upon the self-denying efforts of love.

.... Pray remember me very kindly to any who remember me.

LETTERS TO MISS B—H.

LETTER I.

B—n, August 14th, 1832.

THE notes from S— arrived here last night, and have filled our hearts with sympathy for you and your dear household, and, I trust, with prayer on your behalf. May you be enabled to say, in full assurance of faith, It is well—it shall be well. May you sweetly rest on the faithful bosom of a covenant-keeping God, and feel that when *he* giveth quietness, no *one* and no *thing* can make trouble. “ALL things are yours!” how that little great all takes into its wondrous sweep every little or great cloud that darkens our sky, whether of things present or things to come, and tells of a removed curse and a certain blessing in each and all. May your beloved mother experience, in the fullest sense, Jer. xxxiii. 6; and should it not be the will of our unerring Father to restore health to her dear body, may he reveal unto her the *abundance* of peace and truth. His full heart seems to be longing to give more abundantly, and we, his silly, mistrustful children come with such tiny vessels; we take but a sip, where we might have an ocean. Oh that we might be enlarged according to this rule abundantly! This hardly seems to me like life, after C—; I so unspeakably miss my poor people, and I have been so knocked up with

the journey, and am always so stupified with sea air, that I have scarcely energy to look out for work here, and have tasted for these two days some of the miseries of being dead while I live. I hope and pray to feel more of the lion and the eagle, and especially more of that spirit of adoption which affectionately watches a father's eye, and delights to do any thing and every thing at a father's beck. Our Bible business will come on rapidly. I sincerely hope some of the extreme languor which I now feel, and which will scarcely let me push my pen along, may be removed ere then. It will be, if it is for the glory of God, and painful as it is, I would not part with it on other terms. Did I love you less, I could not send such a thing as this sheet; but love believes that love will forgive, and would rather have pride hurt than have you hurt.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Oct. 1833.

Has not mine heart gone with thee in thine ups and downs, over hill and dale? Indeed it has, and joyfully observed, that amidst all, it is still onward, onward, with you: that it is still THE right way to a city of habitation. I have seen you made much of, of late, in your father's family; for I need not tell you that it is the sick and afflicted child in the family, upon whom

the attention is peculiarly fixed, towards whom the full current of affection flows, and for whom all are made to minister. I have often been struck with it in our family, when I have seen the fond father and mother comparatively regardless of the other beloved children, while every look, and thought, and love, seemed rivetted upon the suffering one. I have looked at you, my loved friend, taken into the inner room, into the "secret of his pavilion;" every scattered drop of comfort concentrated for you in One; every shadow of joy substantiated in One. You can set your seal to Isaiah lxvi. 13; for that is a "*shall*" without a peradventure. Dear C——, I *must* thank my God upon every remembrance of you; for while I see him loading you with such benefits for eternity, I feel almost ashamed to tell him of the little trifles that my blind love at times desires for you by the way. He is sure to tell me, he will withhold no good from you; and how can I then answer again? I could hope he means you and our beloved old friend to sojourn again under our roof. My heart seems to take a grasshopper's leap to this morrow, for I know it must not be very near. Will you not try and turn your and your companion's thoughts northwards, as far as you may cut out any channel for them to run in on earth? Ah, you will tell me, that is not beyond *to-day*.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, August 29th, 1839.

MORE than once have I longed to write to you, but was apprehensive of causing any excitement, which might be injurious to your dear tabernacle. The request, however, conveyed by our beloved Pastor, and seconded by his sanction, emboldens me again to hold sweet converse with one of whom and to whom my heart has often talked, and *for* whom it feels no common interest and regard. I should, perhaps, be ashamed to tell *all* that that heart has said, when it has talked of you; I do *try* to preface it all with "Righteous art thou, *O Lord*," &c., but the "wherefore" is not always in a right key; yet, to the praise of the chief Musician, I must acknowledge he soon puts it in tune, and enables me to rise to concert-pitch, with "He hath done *all* things well." It is so refreshing to tell him, "Lord, she whom *thou* lovest is sick;" but Jesus must show his love to a Martha and a Mary, as well as to a Lazarus; therefore he *hastened*!—no, therefore "he *abode two days still* in the same place where he was." What a two days for Martha and Mary! To witness the last struggle, to close the eyes, to have every ray of hope extinguished, to follow a brother to the grave, when all might have been prevented if Jesus had not delayed; and is this his kindness to his friends? Is this his kindness to

us, in his delayed succours to a suffering friend? Oh! thoughts higher indeed than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth; heights of wisdom, heights of love, passing knowledge. You, dearest C——, are in the secret of his pavilion, and can read upon every twig of the rod, "Even as a father, the son in whom he delighteth." Oh! what would such a rod have been, in the hand of an unknown or frowning God! How tender the love, which placed you upon his bosom, ere heart and flesh failed you, and enabled and entitled a trembling worm to say, "*But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!*" Our very dear old pastor arrived in good health and spirits last Friday; we are quite amazed at the powers of his body, but still more at those of his mind, which seemed to have renewed their strength These little meetings are refreshing, but this is not like a *home-meeting* where each dear one who joins the happy circle will immediately be able to say, "This is *home*—*my home*, my rest *for ever*, I shall go *no more out*;" *here*, on the very day of meeting, the day of parting casts its shade, and the going out treads upon the heels of the coming-in. Our re-union will be one of the *superior order*, in our Father's house, and therefore in the home of each—the sweet home, the *long home*. Thanks, thanks, be unto our God for a hope full of immortality. It would not be well for your dear body to let out my full heart in what I *could* say. We shall meet and love in spiritual bodies, able to bear the exceeding weight of glory and of joy.

LETTER TO MISS C-

ON MARRYING "ONLY IN THE LORD."

September 28th, 1820.

. . . . OUR personal communion was so short, that I am aware it will but ill plead my excuse for the liberty I now take of addressing you; but I am urged by considerations so weighty and powerful, that I cannot but hope they will more than apologize for me. We are dying sinners, hastening to the great eternity; the opportunity of counsel and exhortation is fleeing away as a shadow, and we shall find it again no more for ever. And may I not add the earnest hope, that we are both purchased with the same precious blood; both members of the same dear body, and consequently, if one member suffer or be endangered, the other members must feel suffering and danger with it? Can I then but feel for you, my dear friend, in your difficulties and troubles? Can I but tremble for you in the dangers to which you are exposed? I cannot but hope, from what I saw of you when here, and from what you kindly told me of the state of your feelings, that the arrows of conviction from the Almighty have touched your soul, and that the Holy Spirit has begun his gracious work there. If this is the cause of your tears, I would say, blessed cause! happy tears! yea, precious tears, such as the Lord will treasure up in his bottle, such as shall bring a rich harvest of joy. Still I would not deceive you; I must

remind you that he who knew well the soil of the human heart, tells us that there is ground which receives the word with gladness, and produces something for a season, but that its produce is not calculated to stand against the time of trial and temptation. He tells us also of a soil where the seed was sown and made some appearance, but was choked with the cares and pleasures of this life. I pray God that such may not be the soil of your precious soul. I hope better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak. I am rather inclined to look upon you as one whose inmost soul has heard the voice of the Almighty, saying, and saying it to *yourself*, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." You attempt to rise, but there is one strong chain, and one which you affectionately link around yourself, which holds you back. Pardon me, my dear friend, I am aware that I am now touching a tender part, but, believe me, it is not with an unfeeling hand, nor with an unsympathising heart. The sacrifice truly is great, but what is it compared with what Jesus sacrificed for us? He relinquished for a season a throne, a Father's bosom, all joy, all glory, yea, *emptied* himself, and for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich; and shall we think it much to sacrifice a worm for him? A promise, indeed, is binding; but the command of our God is still more binding, and of infinitely greater importance; and, in my opinion, when these clash, the former should give way to the latter, or we fall into the sin of honouring ourselves more

than God. I rejoice to hear of the postponement of the intended union, and I pray that it may be overruled for good. Yet the faithful love I bear towards your precious soul forces me to declare, that I do not expect that soul to flourish under its present prospects. How could it hold sweet converse with that heavenly Friend, whose cutting inquiry must still be, "Shouldst thou love them that hate the Lord?" For, remember, my dear friend, that the carnal mind, even in the most moral natural man, is enmity against God. How could you feed with pleasure on the contents of that blessed book, wherein is enrolled the express command, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers, come out from among them, and be ye separate?" "Thou shalt not make marriages with them," &c. &c. How could you draw near with confidence to make known your requests unto God, when you hear him saying, "If ye regard iniquity in your hearts, I will not hear you?" "When ye set up your idols in your hearts, and put the stumbling block of your iniquity before your face, should I be inquired of at all by you?" How could you, with holy joy, approach the table of the Lord, and solemnly surrender your whole body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice to him, when, Sapphira-like, you were knowingly keeping back a portion to bestow on one, whom as yet you cannot think to be the Lord's servant? I mention these few particulars to show how utterly impossible it appears to me, that your soul should flourish and be in health under present circumstances; and if so much out of the question now, what would it be, should you enter into the closest of

unions with one who is afar off from your God? will you promise to obey one, who may force you into disobedience to, your God? can you honour one, who honours not your Lord? and can you hold sweet communion with one, who knows not the language of Canaan? can you give your heart to one, from whom you expect to be eternally separated? I can but judge of your friend from your own account of him. He may be made one of the Lord's children, he may be brought to the light and shine, far more brightly than I, who am venturing thus to speak of him. But thinking of him as you now do, pardon me when I say, the Lord has taught me to think the part you are now acting sinful and unspeakably dangerous. We have no license to do wrong from the hope of what may be; nor may we expect a blessing on such a step. Rather let us endeavour to follow the Lord fully; to forsake even husband, children, parents, yea, life itself, should he call us so to do; and then he will stand faithful to his promise, give us a hundred-fold more in this present world, and in the world to come life everlasting. May he enable you, my friend, to act a decided part; then shall your peace flow in as a river, and you shall enjoy a heaven here, and a heaven hereafter, which, that the Lord may in mercy grant, is the sincere prayer of

Your very sincere and faithful friend.

LETTERS TO A VILLAGE FRIEND IN DISTRESS OF MIND.

LETTER I.

Nov. 1829.

I HAVE, as you desired, my dear afflicted friend, been on my knees, begging that *as the pen is in my hand, so I myself may be in the hand of my God*; that I may be only moved and guided by him; and that the words he teaches me to say may indeed be "a message from God" to your precious soul; for truly, except he speak, vain is the help of man. The Holy Spirit has therefore been pleased to take to himself the title of "THE Comforter," not *a* Comforter, but *the* only one; for you and I have both found, my dear fellow-traveller, that until *he* removes the burden from us, not all our companions, however kind, however desirous, can move it one inch; and if he giveth quietness, if it be but, as it were, with a look, who then can make trouble? I have earnestly entreated him thus to turn and look upon you, my sorrowing friend; but before I could ask, he seemed to say, "How is it that thou dost not understand that I *am* looking upon her, or whence would arise these groans of deep distress, this horror that hath overwhelmed her? Does Satan thus disturb his own? Would drowsy, dead nature thus give the alarm?" Ah, Lord, I do see, and I would acknow-

ledge thy might. I find no seared conscience here, but the cries of thy own Spirit, long indeed resisted, long unheeded, but *not* quenched; no, nor ever shall be, till a worm be found stronger than Omnipotence, and exulting devils cry over the ruins of a deserted soul, "Behold *here* proofs of weakness and impotency in the all-wise, all-powerful Jehovah, inasmuch as he began to build, and is not able to finish!" Oh, be such a thought far, far from us! You ask me whether I have ever known such a case as yours; I am truly happy and thankful to have to tell you, that within the last three weeks the blessed deliverance from even worse thralldom than you are in, of a poor woman in this place, has come under my immediate notice. One with whom I used to take sweet counsel, who seemed to enjoy spiritual things, and whose only concern was that her husband did not help her on in the way, was drawn away by the wiles of the devil, and has been a fearful backslider. She said she felt that God had forsaken her; that Satan had full possession of her, that there was not a promise that could reach her; that all I said about her soul was useless, &c. In this awful state she has continued above a year Last week a message was sent by a pious neighbour, to beg I would go and visit this poor woman, who was seeking her long-lost Lord, sorrowing. I went, and found that the faithful Shepherd had indeed brought back his silly sheep from the wretched mountains on which it had been wandering in the cloudy and dark day. In the night she had been roused with the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and the God of peace spoke his own

sweet answer to her very heart, "Believe on the *Lord Jesus Christ* and thou shalt be saved." Once more she looked into her long-unopened Bible; once more she bent her stubborn knee; once more she went up to the courts of the Lord. This was about ten days before I saw her. Her hope is indeed *very* faint, but it comes from *the God of hope*, and shall not make her ashamed. She appears like the poor backslider spoken of in Ezek. xvi. 63, as if she would never open her mouth any more because of her shame, "*When I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.*" I read to her Hosea xiv., to which she listened with many tears; she now and then sobbed out, "Oh, I am afraid I am *lost*!" I said, "I am very pleased to hear you call yourself by that name; you are the very one, then, that Jesus came to seek and to save. I don't ask how far you have been, for he does not; I don't ask how many calls you have slighted, for he does not: but I can tell you this message from his own mouth, 'I will *heal* their backslidings, I will love them freely; mine anger is turned away. They may remember, and go sorrowing at the remembrance; but I will remember *no more*, it shall not be mentioned unto them.'" Ah, my friend, don't think yours are the first wounds of the sort, or the worst that ever were taken in hand. The *first* they surely are not, as many a well-healed David could testify; and the worst—Oh, yes, say you, but they are the worst! Well, be it so; but what are your wounds, that they should exhaust all the balm in Gilead, and withstand all the skill of that almighty Physician? Oh, no, no, no!

you shall yet sit at the feet of Jesus, watering them, it may be, with many tears ; but you shall sit and sing as in the days of your youth, and as in the day when you came up out of the land of Egypt. Hos. ii. 15. The Lord shall speak comfortably to you, and the days of darkness and desertion shall be ended. My paper is full, but my heart has not yet emptied itself. I will pour it out again to the Lord for you, and beg that he may put his blessing in this letter, and then it shall be blessed indeed. . . .

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

September, 1831.

YOUR letter, just received, my dear friend, is indeed a contrast to those I formerly had from you ; and I desire to thank my God for what you now seem to enjoy in spiritual things, sincerely hoping that these are no "sparks of your own kindling," but a steady light and heat, communicated from the holy altar, and that your joy is indeed in the Lord. I trust you are brought up out of the horrible pit of death, curse, and condemnation, and out of the miry clay of earthliness and filthiness in which we all had our conversation in time past. If so, you may well have "a new song in your mouth ;" yea, the same hand that brings the helpless soul out of the pit will put it in, "even praise unto

our God." Simple song! beautiful song! song of every inhabitant of the rock; song of the whole choir above. Praise to our God! no praise to the worm—no praise to an arm of flesh—all to our God. Such a song as fades not upon the lips, nor expires in empty breath; for says the sweet singer, "Many shall *see* it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Psalm xl. 3. Yes, it is the eloquent language of the devoted life, the transparent conduct, the upright walk, the every day and every hour straight-forward traveller to Zion. It is the passive and the active Christian; it is the character encircled with the golden bands, and delighting in those bands, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do *all* to the glory of God." This character sings the new song, the song of the redeemed, in such a manner that many *see* it; the life is an epistle of Christ, known and read of all, written by the Spirit of the living God on the fleshy tables of the heart.

I do hope, (I like still to speak to you as my dear scholar,) I do hope you are enabled to witness a good confession in the trying situation in which you are placed. To a child of God placed in a public-house, we may well suppose our Father would address the same words that he addressed to the church in Pergamos, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." And oh, that he may be able to add to you, "and thou *holdest fast* my name, and hast not denied my faith." Rev. ii. 13. How consoling, how searching, that "*I know!*" My dear fellow-sinner, the day is not distant from

you and from me, when that "*I know*" will be our one whole concern. It will not be what our fellow-worms know or say, or think; it will not be what name we have borne, to what denomination we belong, &c. &c.; we shall have done with names, parties, forms, shadows; our eternity will be absorbed in that one tremendously important point, what our God knows of us. Oh, M. A.! a death-bed is a very, very solemn thing. I can say, as dear Legh-Richmond says, "It requires *strong* evidences for such an hour." No sin looks little then; we begin to call things by their right names, to see them in their right light—the light of eternity. I would not discourage you, nay, I would encourage to boundless confidence in him who is the Lord our Righteousness; but I would say, and I do say, that we are but half awake, but half alive; that when the night cometh, in which no man can work, the most diligent among us will be astonished and ashamed at the way in which we have trifled away our little day. The Lord enable us more and more to live upon him, to live to him, to think, and speak, and act as *dear* children of God! What a wondrous title! Servants of God would be a high honour; children, an unspeakable honour; *dear* children, a condescension, a love, a tenderness, which passeth knowledge! We do not read of dear *angels*; it is worms, hell-deserving worms, who are thus tenderly loved. . . .

May you fully realize 1 Peter iii. 1—4; may you dig into the golden mine, and search into the unsearchable riches of Christ. I commend you to him, and

to the word of his grace, which is able to *build you up* ; and though you dwell where Satan's seat is, may it be a place to which Jesus oftentimes resorts ; yea, may he dwell in you and walk in you, and manifest that he is a Father unto you, and that you are the daughter of the Lord God Almighty. Greater things I cannot ask for you, and greater things you cannot receive.

With my earnest desire that God may be glorified in you, believe me, &c.

LETTERS TO A DEAR VILLAGE FRIEND.

LETTER I.

May 28th, 1816.

You have not, I trust, my dear Mrs. A——, thought me neglectful or forgetful, in not writing to you before. I have endeavoured to write to my dear old friends as often as I could ; and could you all peep into my heart, you would see the same tender sympathy, the same sincere love, the same fervent wishes, that you may all have joy and peace in believing, and live and reign with Christ for ever and ever. I hope I do truly love all that belong to my precious Saviour, however mean their attire, however unpolished their manners ;

and I desire also to be loving and kind towards the poor "strangers," the bond-slaves of Satan, remembering that I was once a stranger in the land of Egypt. We know not but that some, who at this moment are chained to the service of the wicked one, may ere long be received into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Who would have thought, that had seen St. Paul set out for Damascus, fired with rage, *breathing* nothing but *slaughter*, fierce, proud, and headstrong; who would have thought that he was a chosen vessel, a lovely member of him, who is altogether lovely? Who would have thought that had seen the man coming forth from the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one might pass by that way, asking Jesus in the most insulting manner, why he came to torment him before the time; who would have supposed that such a one should soon sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed with the spotless robe of his righteousness, and wishing only to be allowed to follow him whithersoever he went? And had we seen the poor, hardened thief nailed to the cross, and heard the account of the murder and insurrection he had been guilty of, and heard him cast blasphemies and insults into the teeth of Jesus; how little should we have thought that he was, in an hour, to be transformed into an adoring penitent—to be the first fruits of the blood-bought victories of the Lord of glory! I mention these few instances, among the thousand which might be related, to impress upon our minds more of that fervent love and charity we should feel for all, even those who, to us, appear most lost.

We need more of that humility, which, while it says to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister; while it looks to the vilest of sinners, and says, I was alike by nature, *dead* in trespasses and sins, and the child of wrath, fitted to destruction; looks at the same time, with joyful gratitude and hope, to him who hath made us to differ, whose hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor his ear become weary, that it cannot hear; who can bring those we are most inclined to despise or think ill of, or those dear friends over whom our hearts mourn, from darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God. Thus, my dear friends, shall we think lovingly of all; thus shall we hope and believe the best for all; and when we see some of those, about whom we are very anxious, still walking in those paths which lead down to the chambers of death eternal, let us endeavour to cast our care on the Lord, to remember that nothing is impossible with him, that he who has changed our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, can strike the most flinty rock, and the waters of true and godly sorrow shall flow forth.

Perhaps these reflections are more suited to my own case than to yours; but I have found myself judging too hardly of others lately, and have been taking my vile heart to task for it; and having still many thoughts on the subject lurking about me, they crept upon my pen to weary you, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

How deeply have I sympathised with you, my very

dear friend, in those feelings which this time of the year must awaken in you. You see all nature springing into life and beauty, but you see only the cold grave of your beloved child. The *natural* eye sees only this, but, blessed be God, the eye of *faith* pierces the veil, shows a more glorious spring-time of life for your sweet babe; shows you the tender plant, flourishing in the garden of the Lord; yea, sweetly resting in the great Husbandman's bosom. Happy mother! you do not, you cannot grieve; you would not for worlds pluck him from that loving heart, where alone his little weary soul could find repose. Rest there, sweet child, till that awful day, when thou shalt form a part of that bright cloud of spirits with whom Christ shall descend to judgment. O what millions will then wish for thy station, will then wish that they had been so early called from the world, the flesh, and the devil; how will thy joyful mother then praise and love the good Shepherd, who so kindly gathered his little lamb into his bosom, though she so reluctantly parted from it! "Through much tribulation," is the only passage we hear of to heaven. Our beloved Lord became a man of sorrows, and deeply acquainted with grief, ere he could open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He is our forerunner—in his footsteps let us count it our glory to walk; for if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; so as he puts the everlasting arms of his love under us, that is sufficient. St. Paul prayed three times, earnestly, to have his thorn in the flesh taken away; but as soon as ever God had said, "my grace is suf-

ficient for thee," we hear not of one more such prayer, but a *glorying* in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

June 24th, 1816.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Though I feel almost afraid of intruding upon you at this trying season, yet I must assure you I have been pouring out my heart to God many a time for you, and have always returned from the throne of grace with a sweet assurance that he will do for you exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think. He tells me that his thoughts are not my thoughts, nor his ways my ways; he points to the blessed company around the throne, and asks whether I am unwilling my friend should tread the same path they trod; he reminds me of the bright morning of that eternal day which is hastening on, when the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing under his wings. He asks me if I would have that heaviness taken away, which endures for so short a night, and bringeth joy for that everlasting morning.

Thus, my dear Mrs. A——, is my heart soothed and cheered; but I cannot forget that you have a mother's feelings to contend with, and though your spirit may

be willing to believe all this, yet your poor flesh is very weak. Fears will darken the eye of the soul, as well as of the body; and often when we are groaning beneath the Almighty's heavy hand, we cannot lift our eyes to the loving Father's heart and countenance, and remember that,

" Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face."

The words of consolation in the blessed Scriptures to the afflicted are as the stars of heaven for multitude and brilliancy; may you and yours be enabled to apply them to yourselves. Indeed, those writings from above seem principally addressed to the sorrowing pilgrim, the sin-sick, the weary, the heavy laden; and such are you. To you these glorious promises are given, and you shall enjoy their full accomplishment, when the cares, the joys, the doubts and fears, of this sad and fleeting world, are fled away for ever and for ever. "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;" and after all, my friend, these light afflictions are but for a moment, and not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory laid up for you in Christ Jesus.

With the sincerest wishes and prayers for your ever lasting peace, believe me very sincerely yours,

H. P.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

July 5th, 1816.

As I wrote to condole with you, my dear sister in Christ, I cannot now refrain from rejoicing with you over the amended health of your dear children; and oh, that I could help you to praise the Lord for his goodness, and to declare the wonders that he doeth for the sinful children of sinful men. M—— was rather surprised to find you in tears last night, but I think I can guess the cause. Were you not mourning over him whom you have pierced, as one mourneth over an only son? were you not grieving over a cold, ungrateful heart? Ah, this is the grief of every true Israelite; but they that sow in these tears, shall reap in joy unspeakable and full of glory. There was a time when you passed by the cross, wagging your head; when Jesus said, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Your deafened ears heard not the mournful sound; your blinded eyes saw not the bleeding God; and why is it not so now? why do you weep now at the sight of the cross, or at least wish to weep? why is Jesus now the chiefest of ten thousand to you, and altogether lovely? Why, my friend, but because he has placed his Spirit within

you, has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; and remember, he who hath begun the good work in you *will* carry it on unto the day of Christ Jesus. Yes, I have a good hope of meeting you in that blessed place, where God himself will wipe all these tears away, where there are no cold hearts, no stammering tongues, where the lame man shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; where the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: your poor thirsty, barren heart, my friend, shall then rejoice and blossom as the rose; for the wilderness shall become the garden of the Lord: no lion shall be there, to worry and alarm your soul. This glorious time comes on apace. I could grieve at not seeing more of you, but I *dare* not be so ungrateful, when I think of the happy, happy *eternity* we are to spend together. That God may bless you, and lift up the light of his countenance, and cause his face to shine upon you, is, and shall be, the fervent prayer of your very sincere friend in Christ our Lord,

H. P.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

1817.

..... I WAS happy to leave you, as far as I could see, rejoicing more in the Lord, and saying more boldly, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" but I am aware this sunshine *will* not, *should* not, last always; the plant of grace would become weak and straggling, shooting *upwards*, but not taking root *downwards*. The spouse calls for the north wind to awake, and blow upon her garden. We are ready to say at such a time, my hope is cut off; the plant is nipped; yea, I know not if it is not killed. But the Lord sends health on the wings of the wind. Oh, could we see the noxious insects it is destroying—more especially that canker-worm of *pride*—how should we welcome it! how should we bless it! These dark and cloudy days, be assured, are not left out of the list of *the all* things which work together for our good. These work *patience*; they teach us to wait patiently on the Lord, to tarry his leisure; and patience worketh experience. We find that he is faithful who hath promised, and able also to perform; we find that we wait not at the beautiful gates of the temple in vain; that though he gives us not just what we asked for, like Peter with the poor cripple, he gives us something far better; he will not pass us by. This experience worketh *hope*, even a hope that maketh not ashamed;

having experienced his tender love, we learn to trust in him, and to hope for the time to come; we have found that though he hid his face from us for a *moment*, yet with everlasting kindness he will have mercy on us; and thus is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us; thus we learn to love this Friend, who fainteth not, neither is weary of waiting upon us and blessing us, whose love the many waters of our icy hearts can neither quench nor cool; whose tenderness all our unkindness cannot wear out. We love him, because he has stood by us in the time of need, and put every tear in his bottle. When we were constrained to say to every one beside, "miserable comforters are ye all," this dear Physician stepped in with the balm of Gilead. Oh, it is a sweet plea, a ground of much encouragement, which David uses with God, "*Thou hast known my soul in adversities.*" Yes, he has known of griefs and distresses in our souls, which others have not even guessed at. Therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace; come to that Kingly Priest, that God-man, who is so deeply touched with the feeling of your infirmities; who suffered, *really suffered*, being tempted. There hath no temptation befallen you, but your elder Brother has drunk of it, even to the dregs. Do you mourn under the hidings of God's countenance? Look unto Jesus: so completely was his beloved Father's face hid from him, that in the agony of his soul he calls himself *forsaken*; and can you think such a moment as that is effaced from his remembrance? can you think he has forgotten how to feel for his suffering members? No, he

feels for you more than ever you felt for yourself; "*himself*" carried our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Soon, very soon, my friend, you shall be in that happy land, where the inhabitant shall no more say I am sick; and when that pierced hand wipes the last tear from your eyes, you shall look back upon the way by which you came, and of the darkest, roughest parts exclaim, "He hath done all things well." There may your unworthy friend meet you through him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Give my christian love to all your family, and believe me most faithfully and affectionately yours,

H. P.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

July, 1817.

..... Oh, my beloved people! if it has pleased the Lord to make me an instrument of the slightest good to any one of your precious souls, the only return I would ask or wish for is, that you would put in a petition for your unworthy teacher, when you touch the top of the golden sceptre. Speak not of me to man; mention me only to your Lord. In the last day, that great day of the Lord, when the secrets of all hearts are made known, when every thing is revealed that may tend to endear Jesus to his saints, and the people

of God to one another, surely every prayer that we have offered up for each other shall be unveiled. Then, my dear friends, I shall see how much I am indebted to you. What a wondrous display will there be! children indebted to parents, parents to children; husbands to their wives, wives to their husbands; persecutors to those they once hated and reviled; and all these prayers acceptable only as they passed through the hands of the Great High Priest! How dear shall we then be to each other! how unspeakably precious shall Jesus be unto us! Lift up your head, the time cometh on apace; day rolls after day, week after week, year after year. Soon shalt thou see the King in his beauty; and, believe me, you will not then complain of a hard heart, a heart that cannot love; the beams from that sun will melt, will warm your heart. Ah, though the eye of faith is very dim, though there is often, too often, a thick dark cloud upon the mountains, yet your Beloved is coming to you as a hart or a young roe. You cannot be so impatient to be his, as he is to have you with him for ever; he rests in his love; he rejoices over you with joy and singing. Well, hold out faith and patience; soon shall the shout of joy proclaim, the marriage of the Lamb is come; his wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, a robe of the Bridegroom's providing.

Remember me with the truest christian love to all, and believe me most truly and faithfully yours,

H. P.

LETTER VI.

Feb. 12th, 1818.

I MUST, I fear, have appeared a very neglectful shepherd of my beloved little flock, in not having yet held any communion with them; but, blessed be God, I have been enabled to hold communion with him for them. I have come into his presence, and put in my petition for my friends; and sweet is the hope I entertain that my brethren and sisters have not been unmindful of me. I am at times distressed with those words, "They made me a keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Oh, my friends, I charge you, I entreat of you, if ever the Lord has enabled me to speak a word in season to you; if ever my unworthy hand has been nerved to rear up one drooping plant in your vineyard; if ever a sip at so polluted a stream has refreshed your weary souls, and enabled you to press on in the race; by all the ties of nature and of grace, I do entreat of you to make mention of me in your prayers; pray that my vineyard may be watered every moment, kept night and day; pray that that too flourishing, too deeply rooted weed of pride, which here meets with so much to nourish it, may be kept under by the pierced hand of the meek and lowly Jesus; pray that all self-seeking and self-pleasing may be cast down, and the Lord alone exalted in my heart and in my life.

My dear Mrs. A——, you can't think how often

I have naughtily wished to pop you at my side, and let you come in for some of the reproofs which Mr. G—— has lately been giving to his *unbelieving* believers. There were such complaints from them of cold, hard hearts, formal prayers, self-seeking, a worldly spirit, evil tempers, &c. &c.; till, wearied with the black catalogue, the dear, rejoicing, thankful pastor exclaimed, “ Well, my friends, one would think you were serving a hard master ; I hear of many difficulties and distresses—have you not *one* mercy, *one* comfort, to speak of? not *one* instance of faithfulness, tenderness, long-suffering, and truth on record? these things ought not so to be, this all arises from a legal looking to self, and taking our eyes off Christ, in whom we might every moment discover fresh beauties, fresh excellencies. . . . Oh how ungrateful these murmurs! though our hearts be not so as we could wish with God, yet our mourning over this is a pledge that he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure,” &c. Mr. G—— then broke forth in prayer, or rather praise, tracing all the mercies of God, beginning at that one which lays the axe to the root of every murmur, that hell-deserving sinners were yet out of hell, that we were not lifting up our eyes in torment, where prayer is heard no more; yet invited to come freely to a throne of grace, yea, to a throne of glory, &c. &c. . . . Let us then endeavour thus to rejoice in the Lord always; “ whoso offereth me *praise*, he glorifieth me.” We only give place to Satan, and grieve our blessed Lord, by cherishing these melancholy

thoughts; rather let us be busy in raising our Ebezers, rather let us encourage our feeble fellow-pilgrims, by telling them of the faithfulness, tenderness, constancy, and care of our precious Friend. Let us endeavour to lisp on earth, the song which we are to sing through eternity.

. . . . Thanks be to God, I am very happy, and feel not a want or a wish. It will probably be long ere I see you again. May we run on the faster towards that happy point, where we *must* meet; and oh, meet in the fulness of joy, in the presence of the precious Lamb. And in our race, whilst thus separated in the flesh, may we be more and more closely united in spirit, more knit unto him who never leaves us, never forsakes us.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

April 28th, 1818.

. . . . I TRUST my beloved friends will never have reason to think, that, in seeking out other straying sheep, I have forgotten them; though, indeed, I have reason to be very deeply humbled for my want of faithfulness, diligence, and tenderness, while among them; and for the (too often) coldness and deadness of my prayers for them, now that I am absent; yet I do not, I cannot forget them. They are the precious handful of corn,

which the Lord of the harvest bestowed upon me, for my encouragement, when I began to break up the fallow ground, and put my hand to the Gospel plough ! Truly I was an unskilful labourer ; but, thanks to our beloved Master, the success of the undertaking depends not on might or on power, but on *HIS Spirit*. It is this, and this alone, which can visit the earthly heart. It is this blessed Spirit which greatly enriches the desert land with the river of God ; it is this great Seedsman who prepares the corn, when he has so provided for it, watering the ridges thereof, settling the furrows, making it soft with showers, and blessing the springing thereof. Who, indeed, is sufficient for these things, but God alone ? Alas, this is easier to say than to feel ; how often would my vain heart rob my Jesus of the travail of his soul, and call those children of *my* forming, whom he hath begotten with blood, and groans, and tears ! How often do I, a *worm*, who cannot for a moment govern my *own* thoughts, exult, as though I had cleansed the thoughts of another poor sinner's heart ! But why should I trouble my beloved friend with a view of the workings of a heart which is even loathsome in my own partial eyes ? Could I think that yours was plagued with the same diseases, I would gladly lay them open, knowing how the weary pilgrim is relieved in finding that he is not peculiar in his distresses ; that the travellers Zionwards have the same enemies from without, the same fears and conflicts from within ; that *no* temptation hath befallen him but such as is common to all the

beloved children of God: but for my own part, I must confess, there is scarcely a truth in God's word I find more difficulty in realizing than this; yea, I am *very unwilling* to believe that my most precious Lord meets with such a dwelling in any heart as mine. Ah, how often is every room in this wretched inn filled with unhallowed guests, while the Lord of Glory has not where to lay his head! But I am returning to a subject which I said I would leave; most probably it is that you may think me grown *more humble*. There is but one subject on which I can trust my heart or pen to dwell; one dear theme, to which we shall, through eternity, tune our golden harps. It is Jesus, the Friend of sinners, the Lord of glory! This name is as ointment poured forth, ever sweet, ever refreshing to the fainting traveller. Where shall I begin the wondrous theme? Shall I speak of that lowly God-man, who, before the highest parts of the dust of the earth were laid, contemplated, with delight, a time of sojourning with worms of the dunghill? Shall I speak of that love which forced him from a Father's bosom, emptied him of all his glory, brought him from his throne and sceptre, to lie helpless in a stable? which made him exchange hallelujahs for curses, the adoration of thousand thousands for the scorn and derision of men? Shall I speak of that love which gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to those who plucked off the hair; which drank the cup of trembling, even to the dregs, which trod the wine-press alone, bore a beloved Father's curse, and died a million deaths in one? Oh,

love past finding out! Angels, ye would praise your God for it; but it is a mystery whose depth ye cannot fathom. Worms, for you he died. Alas, ye feel it not; or, if ye would praise him, sin damps your hallelujahs, checks your songs. But the hour is coming, (yea, with some of our dear departed brethren, now is,) when we shall be enabled to praise him.

“ Then in a sweeter, nobler song,
I'll sing his power to save;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.”

Your time of trial, if not yet past, is nigh at hand, my beloved friend. Will you not trust love like this? What could have been done more for you, that Jesus has not done? and what good thing will he now withhold? He has given you grace to feel your need of him; and remember what is linked unto grace, in a chain which *never can* be broken: “ He will give grace *and glory*.” He has an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved* in heaven for you; and you are kept for it by *the power of God*. How safe! how happy! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!

. . . . I have now been at this dear place a week; it is a sweet spot, mercy surrounding us on every side; but what I esteem the greatest mercy of all, is the gift of a heart which *cannot rest* in these mercies. Our large garden is walled in with cottages, some containing jewels, others interesting seekers, and all some

work for us honoured instruments. A very dear old minister we have, of whom you shall hear more another time.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

June 24th, 1818.

I MUST take this opportunity of writing once more to you, though my time is peculiarly occupied, and I am anticipating a little coze with you by word of mouth, ere long. Oh, my beloved friends, should I be permitted to sojourn amongst you once more, do, I entreat of you, pray that I may come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; that I may be enabled to refresh you, and be refreshed by you. I look back with many a heart-ache to the idle, unprofitable visits I have too often paid; *talk*, indeed, I did; but my talking was not of the Most High. Vain glory too often animated my tongue, self was exalted, and Jesus placed in the back ground. Fain would I wash out for ever many a visit begun, continued, and ended in this frame of mind; but were mine head waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, they would avail nothing to wash out one of these stains. To my injured, slighted Lord only can I turn; and oh, what a reception do I here find! "Before they call, I will answer." Ah, Lord, and what wilt thou say to such a wretch?

“ Cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned : tell her, that the thickest cloud of sin is blotted out : tell her, that when they are brought to her charge, I, her Judge, will justify her ; that every mouth which riseth against her in the judgment shall be condemned : tell her, I love her *from* everlasting to everlasting ; that the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness cannot, and shall not depart from her : tell her, though the fondest mother may forget her helpless babe, yet will not I forget her : tell her, she is perfect through my comeliness ; that I can find no spot in her, nay, that I cannot rest satisfied until I have brought her into my rest, into my joy, into my glory, into my presence : tell her, I rest in my love and rejoice over her with joy and singing.” Truly, my Lord, this love to me is wonderful. Unbelief is ready to say, “ How can these things be ? ” but, though too often I believe not, yet thou abidest faithful.

I must now congratulate you, on the loan you have lately received from the Lord. I have been truly happy to hear that you passed safely through this time of danger, for I am very unwilling to part with you ; you are wanted in the church militant, though you would receive a joyful welcome in the church triumphant. I pray that your new treasure may be a jewel of the Redeemer's crown, and that you may lend her to the Lord so long as she liveth.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

Feb. 15th, 1819.

I FEEL at a loss which to address first of all my precious flock; but I think the foremost on my list are those who have been long dear to me in the flesh, and who ministered to me in carnal things long before I was enabled to minister unto them in spiritual things. Among these, your name, and the old servants surrounding dear F——e, have the first claim. . . . With mingled emotions, my beloved friend, did I pass your happy house, on the morning of the 21st. I looked at the little glimmering light in your dwelling, while the brightening horizon promised to give you, ere long, an ample substitute for your expiring taper; the morning star shone brightly as the forerunner of a day in which you would not want the light of a candle; and should I not trust One, who had made such rich provision for your temporal wants, to provide for your spiritual also? Though your poor glimmering taper was departing from you, yet, blessed be God, the “bright and morning star” has been given unto you, the harbinger of an eternal, a cloudless day. Soon, soon shall your precious soul awake, and shake itself from the dust; soon shall every shadow of night flee away; soon shall the chilling damps of night be dispersed; soon shall slumber break from the eyes of your drooping soul, and you shall wake up in the likeness of

him who is altogether lovely. Then shall you no more need the light of a candle, for the *Lord* shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Ah, my friend, with such a day before us, we might well be content to go through a night of gloominess and suffering! But it is the will of our God that our joy should be full. He hath already given us the bright and morning star, even Christ, the hope of glory. He bids us lift up our eyes and look unto the hills, behold the dawn of day on the tops of the mountains, the shadows fleeing away, and our Beloved, like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of division so speedily coming towards us. Behold, his desire is towards us; no exile can so hasten to be loosed, as he hastens to receive us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also. Angels wait for a fuller discovery of the honours that shall be put upon that people whom their King delighteth to honour; yea, heaven shall be emptied for an escort to take his bride home; "he shall come, and *all* the holy angels with him." Then shall the "tabernacle of God be with men, and *he* will dwell with them." No need then of *creature* comforts, no need of shallow streams; the Lord shall be your all-satisfying portion for ever, and you shall drink at the fountain-head of blessedness. Thus, my dear Mrs. A——, was my heart revived in the painful separation from you and my little flock; thus, when against your prayers and entreaties, I seemed to rob you of your broken cistern, my heart rested with delight on that living fountain ever opened to all who

are athirst. It pleased the Father, that in Jesus should *all* fulness dwell, and should it not please us also? Neither men nor devils can shut us out from it; ever near, ever open, capable of satisfying the largest demands. From this we are encouraged to take, until we be filled with all the *fulness* of God. Well then may we ask, How can the soul a *drop* be-moan, That has a *fountain* near? One thing, however, in separation from friends, I must acknowledge, ever weighs heavy upon my heart, and that is, that our communing, whilst we walked together by the way, has not been more of Jesus; that our talk has not been so much of his righteousness and wondrous works, as of our poor worthless selves, and of our doings; that we have not tuned our hearts and voices more to songs which we hope to sing together through eternity; that our conversation has been so much of *present* things, of a wilderness which is fleeing away as a shadow; of difficulties which are vanishing as smoke; of enemies, whose place shall soon be sought for, and shall not be found, whilst crowns, thrones, victories, mansions in glory, an eternity with Jesus, so little occupied our hearts and lips. How often, were Jesus to join us, as we walk by the way, and are sad, (as he did those going to Emmaus,) might he ask, "where is your faith? and *how* is it that ye do not believe? O slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Who would believe, that overheard us, that we have such an inheritance before us! The exile speaks of the day when his term of banishment expires, the prisoner, of the end of his imprisonment, the school boy, of

his holidays, the heir to an estate, of the day when he comes into possession; and have believers no such blessed period to speak of? Ah, it is unbelief that stops their mouth; they question whether these things shall really ever be for them; they look for a title in themselves, and there they never are to find it. In Jesus, our title is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; though we change, yet he changeth not; he has secured the purchase, he has the keys of death and hell, wherewith to set us free; already hath he made us sit with him in heavenly things and places; not the meanest member shall be, or can be, left behind. "The head will not say to the foot, I have no need of *thee*;" because he lives, we *must* live also. I have left but little room to tell you how we are going on here. Our God is good, and doeth us good continually . . . Take care of your earthen vessel, because it is not your own, but bought with a price.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

May, 1820.

CAREFULLY do I catch a glimpse of my precious little flock, as it travels through the wilderness, ere I am moved from them, and can behold them only with

the eye of faith, as they come up, leaning on their Beloved. The flesh must feel the separation, while the spirit says, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight;" yea, though many a long mile lies between the travellers, the spirit finds matter for abundant joy. It beholds the flock *coming up*; unable, unwilling to lie down, and take up its rest, in a land so greatly polluted. The spirit sees the travellers, when deprived of every created friend, in possession of the most powerful, the most faithful, the most loving of friends: One who removes every unnecessary thorn from their path; who will carry them in his bosom, when they grow weary, or the road becomes too rough, for them: One who will spread a table for them in the presence of all their enemies, and whose unchanging word is passed, "*nothing* shall by any means hurt you." I see that our paths, though a little apart now, meet in a point at the end; and oh, what a point is that! a Father's home, a Father's bosom. I see that we are approaching that blessed end as fast as time can move; and what can I, what dare I, ask for more? What can I tell my God we are in want of, with such a portion? I may tell him that we want eyes to see and hearts to feel, our blessedness. Then would not the soul a drop bemoan, which has a fountain near. Then would the feet run with patience and alacrity the race set before them. Then would the children of a King go singing over the roughest path which was leading them to such a home. Lord, increase our faith!

I feel assured, my dear Mrs. A——, that we

have had a large place in your thoughts and prayers, and I would hope in your thanksgivings; for truly we have abundant cause to be thankful. Mercy embraceth us on every side. The promise is abundantly fulfilled to my beloved brother and sister here, "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing," &c. . . . I must only add my kindest regards to all.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

April 2nd, 1821.

. . . . I KNOW not when I have been much more in earnest in calling upon my God, than for you, my beloved friend, while I have been looking at you walking through a furnace heated one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. It was not long since you were speaking to me of the delightful shadow which your beloved child began to yield you; what must have been your feelings, when your gourd began to wither, when a vehement east wind, and a scorching sun of temptation beat upon you, and the busy tempter almost forced your heart to say, "I do *well* to be angry?" I have deeply sympathized with you in all these things; but while my poor sympathy could profit you little, a far better Friend, I well know, has been afflicted in your every affliction, has stayed his rough wind

in the day of the east wind; has walked with you in the furnace, and in every temptation has made a way for you to escape. For the life of your child you prayed, and the Lord hath given you your petition which you asked of him. May you have grace to add with Hannah of old, not—therefore, I will rejoice in my child, and prize her more dearly than before; but, “Therefore also have I *lent* her to the *Lord*: as long as she liveth shall she be lent unto the Lord.” So shall you indeed enjoy your child here, and hereafter shall receive your own with abundant usury. You will, I know, mourn that you cannot do this more. Well, my friend, bless that God who hath put the *desire* into your heart; he knows your weakness, and he kindly says, “It is well that it is in thy heart.” In the country where our best treasures are kept, we shall be able to hold them without danger of crushing them by our too eager grasp: we shall drink of rivers of pleasures, and pollute the stream no more with our sinful lips of clay. Ah, happy country! May we keep it more steadily in view!

Give my love to dear C——, and tell her I hope she has found Jesus precious to her.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

January 17th, 1822.

It is, I hope, with a grateful heart, that I this morning hear how the Lord has shown mercy unto you; and as I have prayed for you, I would now praise our prayer-answering God. In this land, however, fresh mercies bring fresh snares; and prayer and praise must be laid together on the altar of incense. You have another tie to earth, my beloved friend, another weight upon your wings, which fain would shake themselves from the dust, and soar upward. But he who bestowed the gift has sanctified it; his watchful eye has foreseen every danger, and his faithful heart has not ceased to pray for you, that your faith fail not. "The seed of the righteous is blessed." I welcome the dear little stranger, as one of the blessed of the Lord, and I congratulate you that the child born of you is, we may humbly hope, a child of the most high God. May you hold her, as though you held her not; may your chief joy ever be in *the holy child Jesus!* Precious name! Dwell upon it; when sin comes in like a flood, when fiery darts fly thick, remember he cannot answer to his name, but as he saves his people from their sins.

I have much to write, and little time. Give my true christian love to all my dear old friends, &c.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

December 18th, 1826.

IF I had only time to tell you that I love you, and think about you, I cannot let this parcel go, without a line to say so; and perhaps it may just refresh you to remind you, that Jesus loves you, and will love you to the end, and surely the only wonder is, that blood-bought pilgrims can talk of any thing beside. Ah, say you, I wish I could be sure of that, and I would talk about it. Why, my dear friend, your very wish is an assurance; nature never gave birth to it, and I think you will not give the devil credit for it. Then who created it? One who never leaves a work unfinished—One who loved you before the world was—One whose love cannot know a shadow of turning, who says in your worst days, “I have not seen iniquity, neither have I beheld perverseness in her. I am the same, I change not.” Bring your poor cold heart to this glowing fire of his love, and see if it does not get a little warmth; and sit not puffing over the poor, dying embers of your love to him. We live by his life, and love by his love. We may not, cannot, keep a stock of our own; it would breed worms.

Kind christian love to all old friends. . . .

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

February 2nd, 1830.

HAD I written to you as often as my heart has wished it, you would have had many a long letter from me ere this; but in this, as in many other things, I could say, "TO WILL is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Yet why did I *wish* to write to you, but because you were dear unto me? and why does my sister in Christ so often cry out with tears, "Oh, that I could but hold more communion with the Lord! Oh, that I could but pour out my heart before him, and be quite sure that he speaks comfortably to *me*, even to *me*!" Why, but because he has let fall into her heart a drop of love from his overflowing bosom, and given her this desire to love him, who hath *first* loved her with an everlasting love? Wrong him not, my dear friend, nor think that a heart, by nature a lump of enmity against God, could ever feel a drawing towards him, if it were not for a golden chain let down from his own heart. Wrong not the riches of his grace by saying, "I am too vile; I have sinned against light and love!" Oh remember, "If when we were *enemies* we were reconciled unto God by the *death* of his Son, *much* more, *being* reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." What were we, when Jesus was agonizing for us in the garden, dying

on the accursed tree? "*Haters of God.*" "I know thee," might he say, "that thou wouldst deal *very* treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb." Yet, dead as we were in trespasses and sins, prepared to fight against God with a high hand even from our mother's womb; then, even then, the Father could say he was *well pleased*; the Surety could say, "It is finished;" and the Holy Ghost could declare, the Messiah had "made reconciliation for iniquity." You must acknowledge, in your darkest moments, that you are reconciled to God; that the enmity is removed; that "it is your chief complaint that your love is weak and faint." And was this effected by the death of his Son? when crucified *through weakness*, was there this *mighty power* for you, an unborn, hardened rebel? Then with what a wondrous emphasis does this "*much more*" come in? The Lord give us to understand better the weight of this golden argument! Much more, being reconciled, children, adopted, received into the family, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, we shall be saved by his life. Yes: "you being *dead* in your *sins*, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, (you cannot make out a more loathsome state,) hath he *quickened together* with him, having forgiven you *ALL* trespasses." Look at "the power of this *endless* life;" and that precious "because I live, ye shall live also;" our life wrapped up in his; nay, not barely living, but our reconciled, well-pleased Father hath made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places! Oh, for more realizing views of this our *redemption* Sabbath! Can we say, "We

which have believed, do enter into rest?" Can we say, we have ceased from our own works, as God did from his—no beginning again on *Monday*? "Oh, but if I could pray better; if I could love more; if my hard heart were but more broken!" My dear friend, this is a sad breaking of our christian Sabbath, a sad slighting of that dying triumph of our Jesus, which will never cease to sound in heaven, earth, and hell, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." This is a turning away from "the rest and the refreshing wherewith he causes the weary to rest." This is but labouring for very vanity, and disquieting ourselves in vain. The soul grows lean with the fruitless toil; the disappointed spirit is overwhelmed; and in place of the Christian *triumphing always in Christ Jesus*, we behold the child bound with the fetters of a slave, and groaning under cruel bondage.

While I speak to you, I would speak first to my own dull, stupid heart, and address it in those strange words, "Let us LABOUR, therefore, to enter into that rest." This, this is our work—well called the *work* of faith—to give God *full credit*, to take him at his word; simply to believe that he means what he says; to stand *first* in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This brings the loving spirit, the tender heart, the child-like dependence, the God-honouring walk. This, and this alone, brings into the rich experience of each vessel of mercy, that which the Lord has spoken concerning them, "The *loftiness* of man *shall be bowed down*, and the haughtiness of men shall be *laid low*, and the Lord alone shall be exalted." Ah,

~~But your dear sister~~ says "Amen" to this ; so does mine, through rich, distinguishing grace ; but oh, the struggles and groans of the old man at this *laying low* work. Happy, happy for us, that God is greater than our hearts ; that the decree is gone forth, "Sin shall not have dominion over you ;" and for this blessed reason, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." This specious, self-seeking righteousness, this wolf dressed in sheep's clothing, that would fain make us call it a desire of holiness, humility, and many other pretty names—the Lord give us to know this messenger of Satan in all its disguises ; the Lord give us to make him, what he has most graciously made himself to us, "the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the Author and the Finisher."

I fear I have but darkly expressed, what as yet I do but see through a glass darkly ; but I often fear that my *first* loved, and I may say *best* loved little flock are not often led to the "*high mountains of Israel*," and I try to plead for them, Ezek. xxxiv. 14, 15. How precious that "*I* !" "I will ;" what ? "*feed* ;" not only *provide* food, but *feed* ; they shall have it all from his own dear pierced hand. They shall lie down ; no, not so ; "*I will cause* them to lie down." Never, never shall the richest promise prove a resting-place, till the Lord spread it out for us ; nor ever shall our weary souls be able to lie down upon one corner of it, however open and free it looks, till that good Shepherd *cause* us to lie down. But I need not tell you this, my dear sister ; you know it well ; but perhaps, like me, you too often forget it, when you turn into the good

pasture of his Word; and then we wonder why "the promise meets our eye, and will not meet our case;" we wonder why we are still "ill-favoured and lean-fleshed," though we have eaten chapter after chapter; we wonder why our weary soul still wanders to and fro, after the incessant call, "Return unto *THY* rest, O my soul!" Let us resort yet more and more unto these pastures, but let it be with an eye more intensely fixed upon our Shepherd, a heart more simply looking unto him, a mind more entirely dependent upon him. Then shall we be *abundantly* satisfied with the fatness of his house, and find that he has indeed bread enough and to spare, &c. . . .

. . . . I have been writing the latter part of my letter almost in the dark, and fear you will have great trouble in making it out; but if you can spell out a little of the faithful love of your old friend in this sheet, I shall be pleased; and I shall ask my Lord to make whatever I have written aright of his dear name to be as ointment poured forth, and then I know it will refresh you. Remember me kindly to all your family; may you all fully experience Psalm xc. 16, 17.

LETTER TO MISS L—Y T—Y.

S—n, February 26th, 1826.

To my great surprise, your mother tells me that you cannot rest satisfied without a letter from me; conse-

quently, though I have many calls upon my time, I am in my turn in a state of restlessness, till I have endeavoured to set you at rest, by devoting a portion of it to you. But what shall I write, that may please and edify you? If I am happy enough to do so, it will only be in proportion, as my letter is derived from that precious letter, which is sent from the court of the King of kings, and which is open unto you continually. Oh, what can you render unto the Lord for the unspeakable mercy, that to *you* is the word of this salvation sent—that for *you* the Lamb has prevailed to open those seals, which no creature in earth or in heaven could have opened—that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your heart, so that in *his* light you see light? When you look at the thousand thousands, to whom this letter has never yet been sent; the tens of thousands to whom it is, a dead letter, closed and sealed from them; the thousands who have the light shining in the midst of such gross darkness, that they comprehend it not—and the millions against whom this letter will be a swift witness; the distinguishing grace and loving-kindness of God towards you do indeed appear. You will, I know, be ready to accuse yourself for prizing this precious book no more, for studying it with so little prayer and praise, for fashioning yourself so partially by it. But while to us must ever belong shame and confusion of face, let us at least endeavour to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, to bless him for every spark of grace in such an ocean of corruption, for every ray of light that pierces through

such thick darkness. That even one word of his has been to you quick and powerful, one promise been made a song in the house of your pilgrimage, one precept been so hid in your heart as to preserve you from sinning against him; these are mercies for which your heart should ever glow, for which your life should ever be ready to show forth his praise; and, truly, praise is comely and healthy for the soul; it satisfies it, as with marrow and fatness, and strengthens it to offer yet another and another sacrifice, even the calves of our lives.

Your mother tells me, dearest L——y, that you feel grateful to me as the unworthy, but honoured instrument of good to your precious soul. Of this I was, previously, quite unconscious; but I trust, while it has greatly added to my debt towards that wonder-working God, who has condescended to use so very vile a tool, it has also added to my poor tribute of gratitude and praise, and encouraged me in my labours for such a Master. But when I weigh my love for your dear soul, with his everlasting love; my concern about you, with that interest which he felt, when he even agonized and died for you; my watchfulness, with his every moment's care; I am ashamed to think that you should, for one instant, look at the instrument, or spend one particle of love and gratitude upon it. Much as I prize your love, I would desire freely and unreservedly to transfer it all to him who alone is worthy, and I think I would be content even to be forgotten by you, if by that means Jesus might be more fervently prized.

I hope you are enabled to go cheerfully through your occupations, remembering that you are in the path of duty while *six* days you *labour*. Blessed be God, yours is not the complaint of those of old, "We labour and have no rest." You do know the rest and the refreshing wherewith the weary may rest in the midst of toils and weariness. Let all you do be done as unto the Lord; and of the Lord you shall receive the reward of peace, quietness, and assurance for ever.

If ever a feeling of love and gratitude towards me springs up in your heart, try and turn it into prayer for me. So will you repay a thousand-fold one who is indeed poor and needy.

LETTER TO MISS R—— T——Y.

S——n, August 11th, 1828.

WHEN I consider what an exertion it must have been to you to write to me, and how kind it was of you to make that exertion, I am trebly ashamed of my long silence; and though the "old man," who is never at a loss for excuses, could now fill pages with reasons why I have not written ere this, I would rather hush the self-justifier, and place the omission under the head of that dark, long list of things left undone which *ought* to have been done. Oh, how

cheering to turn from this dark list to the records of the life of One who fulfilled *all* righteousness, and to be permitted to inscribe over this, "The Lord *my* righteousness." While I hear from the mouth of my well pleased God, "You are complete in him," I wonder, gaze, admire, and rejoice: but every omission acquires a ten-fold darkness, while contrasted with this glorious brightness; and in this light sin does indeed appear *exceeding* sinful. May I increasingly see and feel how much is forgiven, how much is *freely* given, that I may love much!

You, my beloved child, are now hid in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle, and appear, as it were, to stand in the vestibule of your Father's house. How would an affectionate child, in such a situation, long to see the servant arrive to open the inner door and admit her to her Father's bosom. But why speak I of a servant? Jesus, the overlasting Father, has declared, "*I* will come again and receive you unto myself." Yes, he who has done the meanest, lowest services for you in your low estate; he who himself washed you from your blood, when no other eye pitied you, when no other hand could or would have touched you; he who anointed you, clothed you, who stoops to wash your feet daily from every pollution contracted in your walk through this dirty world; he, whose joy spread a fresh glean of gladness over his surrounding gladness, when your trembling feet took the first step Zionward; he, even he himself, has undertaken to be with you in your last step, and of all the precious objects that engage his attention, of all

the scenes in which he rejoices, (we speak emphatically, but we speak after him, when we say,) "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." While he thus takes pleasure in having you with him, that you may behold his glory, may you joy more and more in the sweet prospect of being ever with the Lord; freed from your vile body, far from the assaults of every enemy, out of the reach of every storm with him in whose presence is the *fulness* of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. I greatly rejoice to find that he has enabled you to take him at his word: to believe that he will deal bountifully with you *according* to his word: this is the secret of comfort, joy, peace, holiness, and happiness. Oh, write over against every precious promise, the self-answering inquiry, "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" We want more simplicity in hearing what God the Lord saith unto us, more of the spirit of a little child: we often gainsay, and argue, and cavil more against a God of truth than we do against a fellow worm. And, for our further encouragement, the glorious treasury of the promises is Christ Jesus, perfectly secure from every enemy and from all decay; and the power, the justice, the mercy, the truth of God are glorified when any promise is fulfilled in any poor sinner; for they are all in Christ, yea, and in him, amen, to the glory of God by us. What encouragement, then, have we to plead with every promise, "Now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant be established for ever, and do as thou hast said." Soon, with a less tremulous hand,

shall you set to your seal that God is true; and, with a less tremulous voice, eternally testify, that not one thing hath failed of *all* the good things that he hath spoken concerning you

. I shall rejoice to hear that the Lord is pleased to prosper your dear mother and sisters in their school: but, whether he frowns or smiles, it is all from the same source, *love*, and all to take away sin and to do us good at our latter end. There can be no variation in the thoughts that he thinks toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil.

. I trust I need not say many words to assure you of the faithful and affectionate love of your sincere friend.

LETTER TO MISS T—Y.

S—n, April 27th, 1831.

It was with sincere sympathy I last night heard of the hot furnace in which you are now placed. I hasten to assure you of that sympathy, for however vain creature help, in circumstances such as yours, yet it is the appointment of our Head, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and while by this unerring appointment sorrows are, as it were, multiplied in the body, their very multiplication is the means of their mitigation. But what shall I say unto my beloved children? Ah! the Lord has put a word in my mouth; he has bid me say, "I will not leave you

orphans: *I will come unto you.*" Faith will answer, "It is enough. I have all and abound, having the fulness of him who filleth all in all." Jesus, my Father, Mother, Husband, Brother, is yet alive; and he bears no empty names: all that I could have enjoyed of the creature in these relations would have been but a drop out of his fulness. He saw me too well content with drops; and because it is his will that my joy should be *full*, he has broken down every cistern to which I so eagerly ran, and thus constrained me to come to the Fountain. Beloved children, my very heart bleeds, when I think what you will feel in beholding the desolation of a cistern from which you have derived your best drops, and to which, from your very birth, you have been so accustomed to resort. But do *I*, the very least little member of the body, feel for you thus? What does the Head feel? Ah! He sees you bereft of a mother's comfort, and he steps in and says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you;" and he adds, (what your beloved mother could never add with all her most strenuous and affectionate endeavours) "*Ye shall be comforted.*" Oh the omnipotency of his love! the bowels of his compassions! It is but to open to us fresh stores of these, that he ever suffers a pricking brier, or a grieving thorn, to distress and wound us. I ought to congratulate you, my dear friends, not only that your precious mother is escaping the evil to come, and entering into rest, but that the Lord is about to lay a double claim, as it were, upon you; to bind himself to you by double ties, and to give you the choicest place in his pavilion. He will mani-

fest unto you what he means when he undertakes to be a *God* unto Israel. Oh may he keep you from wronging his faithful heart by any hard thoughts; may he make you quite sure that *all* his paths are mercy and truth; that he knows the thoughts that he thinks toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end; and you will surely "kiss those troubles at parting, which you met with trembling." May he cause you to know the certainty of the words of truth, and to welcome those workmen, however rough, who are engaged by one Master, and combined to accomplish good, and only good for you.

A great pressure of occupations, within and without, obliges me to desist from writing more, and must plead my excuse for the extremely hurried way in which I have written. But "the desire of a man is his kindness;" and truly it is my desire to minister unto you; and if this scrawl does but convince you that you are still dear to your Teacher, it may be a gleam of sunshine in a cloudy day: but oh that it may be a means of darting a ray of the love of Jesus across your path, and then I shall not have written, nor you have read, in vain. To his most loving, faithful heart, and unceasing care, I would affectionately commend you. May he fill, to overflowing, every craving void: and when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? If you can spare a prayer for a pilgrim, and a soldier about to engage with hosts of Philistines, remember me.

LETTER TO MISS A. R. T—Y.

C—n, August 30th, 1827.

PRAISE to the precious seed! and praise to the good Husbandman! She that went forth weeping, now comes again with rejoicing, bringing sheaves with her: but neither is she that planteth any thing, nor she that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Thank you for your grateful remembrance of the old plough; it made rough work sometimes, but God settled the furrows; made them soft with showers, greatly enriched them with the river of God, prepared the corn, and blessed the springing of it. Let him have all the love, and all the praise, for he only is worthy. I could love to see your dear faces again; but I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth, and this my joy is fulfilled in you. And now tell ye your children of him whom your soul loveth; and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation, till the world be filled with the odour of that precious name, which is as ointment poured forth. Then go to heaven, and find that the thousandth part hath not been told; go there and see the *sitting* of his servants, and the meat of his table, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel; and if shame can enter heaven, you will have no more spirit in you to think you spoke so coldly—so unworthily—so unfrequently of such a

King—such a Brother—such a Husband! The Lord touch our hearts and lips with a live coal from the altar, and keep it glowing amidst the damps and fogs of the wilderness!

LETTERS TO MRS. P—E.

LETTER I.

F—e, Aug. 29th, 1825.

I NEED not, I hope, assure you how much my heart is with you all, and how particularly I have thought of you as my kind substitute on Sunday with my much-loved children. I hope to have such accounts of them as will lead me to say, with fresh joy and gratitude, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." To you, my dear friend, I feel assured that it will prove a source of joy, however arduous and even appalling the work may at times appear; however unpromising the soil, the word of your God is gone forth, that your labour shall *not* be in vain. The seeds watered with tears often come up the stronger, and it is the weeping seedsman who shall at last bring his *sheaves* with him. Tell my dear girls that my heart has been lifted up in prayer for them, and that the day is very near when I shall know which of their hearts have been lifted up for their absent teacher, and for which of my many mercies I am indebted to

their prayers. The time begins to seem very long since I saw them, and reminds me how awfully long the separation would be, should the Lord say to any one of them "Depart into *everlasting* burnings." Oh! the thought that I could never get near them again; once more invite them to Jesus; never behold them, except at an impassable distance, lifting up their eyes in torments; my very heart shrinks from it. The Lord forbid it, and grant that we may meet in that blessed place.

"Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end."

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

B——n, July 17th, 1826.

I CAN no longer forbear calling upon our beloved friends to unite with us in praise and thanksgiving to our adorable Lord, for the multitude of tender mercies showered down upon us during the last week. Through his most mighty protection, our party of fourteen has been carried through 170 miles without so much as the fear of danger; and when we all assembled here on Friday, in perfect health and peace, we could but exclaim with gratitude and wonder, "What hath God

wrought?" and if he has taught our hearts to glow with gratitude for bodily preservation, through a few miles here, and for the peaceful re-union of our dear party, what will he make these hearts to feel, if, through rich grace, we join the general assembly of the church of the first-born, to recount in that day of "our gathering together unto Jesus," the mercies, the deliverances, the joys, and sorrows of the narrow path, by which he has led us through this waste howling wilderness; this land of deserts and of pits, of drought and of the shadow of death! There is something to me peculiarly dear in that expression "*general assembly*." Though we seem to be a large party here, still how many, whom we dearly love, are missing; but of that general assembly we may say,

"Apostles, prophets, martyrs, there
Around our Saviour stand;
And all we love in Christ below,
Shall join the glorious band."

In that general assembly there will be no division of church or meeting walls. *One temple, one song, one light, one love, one joy*, even the joy of our Lord. Oh, may we hasten in spirit and affection towards that blessed "*gathering together*," and count every rest but restless till we arrive there.

. We got among some of the poor people yesterday, and I am thankful to say they receive us cheerfully and gratefully. May our God prepare work for us here, and prepare us for it; but I believe I like best to move in a round of daily duties, like a horse in

a mill, and am never so happy as when so employed : yet it is well for me to be sometimes taken out of the mill, to know whether I am willing to do any other work my Master requires, and whether it is his love which constrains me, or whether I go my rounds from habit and formality. Pray that I may be ready for every good word and work every where, and at all times.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

B——n Q——y, July 27th, 1826.

. You may well say your's is a situation to be envied ; for to minister to the precious members of our adorable Lord, is an honour and a privilege for which angels leave the habitations of glory, and hover around the tabernacle of worms ; yea, not only around the tabernacle, but for this joy and privilege they cheerfully enter the meanest dwelling, pitch their tents beside the bed of languishing, or minister to the outcast Lazarus. I desire to thank my God, upon every remembrance of you ; and while I bless him for the effects of a *drop* of his compassions, as it were, in your soul, what shall I say, what shall I think of him who is *full of compassion* ? With what joy may I think of him “ *going about doing good* ; ” making *all* the bed of the sick ; binding up the broken

in heart ; giving *just* the medicine to heal soul diseases ; sitting as a comforter among the mourners, afflicted in all their afflictions, and most backward to give the necessary pain. If you, my beloved friend, find such pleasure in your labour of love, what does Immanuel feel ? How truly does he rejoice over his people to do them good, with his whole heart and with his whole soul ! Oh may we be enabled quietly to leave with him the way of doing us good ! may we rest assured, that what we know not now we *shall* know hereafter, and that however dark the cloud, there is a bright shining behind it, and that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of *peace* and *not* of evil, to give us an expected end. Dear Mr. — has scarcely been out of my thoughts since your letter. May the God of *all* consolation be better to him than ten wives, yea, than ten thousand rills of earthly comfort ; may he be enabled to drink of the river of his pleasures, and be abundantly satisfied ! When I had the comfort of seeing him, he seemed to feel, and I think, almost to say, that he could give up every thing, if he might have an interest in Jesus. Does he know that sweet hymn,

“ I asked the Lord that I might grow ? ” &c.

I have thought so much of it, since I have found by what terrible things in righteousness the Lord has answered his prayers for growth in grace. Assure him and all my afflicted friends of my tender and prayerful sympathy, and that though absent in body, I

am very often with them in spirit.
 My gracious Master
 has most kindly opened a door for me here for my
 favourite work, and I have a very attentive party of
 about thirty children to address every Wednesday
 afternoon; may he speak to their very hearts. We
 also have in view the formation of a Bible Association;
 mountains stand in the way, but we have seen our
 Forerunner level the mountains around us, so that we
 are enabled cheerfully to follow his leading, believing
 that the mountains shall become a plain.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Sept. 21st, 1830.

I WAS half inclined to scold you, my very dear friend,
 for making so much of my poor letters; but really you
 have repaid me so handsomely that I can
 do nothing but thank you and let you go
 on, well knowing of whom you ask counsel, and inquire
 in all things, "What wouldst *thou* have me to do?"
 May you ever enjoy a full answer, according to Isaiah
 lviii. 11. It is a sweet employment to "gather the
 church together, and rehearse all that God hath done
 with us, and how he hath opened the door of faith
 unto the Gentiles." But "when I would do good, evil

is present with me;" and when I *would* lay all the emphasis upon what *God* hath done, and the door which *he* hath opened, vile self would fain push in for a corner. Well; it does make one long to sing and praise in that blessed land, where self cannot creep in, where we shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, when self is sunk as lead in the mighty waters, and the LORD alone is exalted. Oh, what an unspeakable mercy to have a heart tuning up for that song; to have the *desire* to ascribe *unreservedly* blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!

You *well* know, my beloved fellow-labourer, that it is the sole prerogative of him who has the keys of the house of David, to open the strongly-locked hearts of the children of men; and you will give him *all* the praise, while I give you a peep at one or two opening hearts, which I have met with in my visits. Entering a house, I found an intelligent looking woman, very busy, with three little children around her. Her attention, however, was soon arrested, and having set a chair for me, we both sat down, and her eyes were fastened upon me, as I began to speak of the state of her poor soul. They soon filled with tears, and to my surprise and delight she sobbed out, "Ah, I was up at the Hall once, and Mr. — read about the poor heathen worshipping crocodiles and all manner of foolish things; and that seemed very shocking, but they are not half so bad as I am, for *they do* worship *something*, and *I* worship *nothing*." She covered her face with her apron, and sobbed aloud, and I could

scarcely refrain from weeping with her, though, you may believe, mine were tears of joy. Finding her really burdened with a sense of sin, I said, "I have a message from God to you, and I think you will find he is addressing you by name." I then read Matt. xi. 28. She said, "Ah, that's to me, sure enough, for I am *indeed* weary and heavy laden." I told her I was delighted to hear her say so, and that God had commissioned me to speak nothing but comfort to her. I read Isaiah xl. 1, 2. Her look was so eager and expressive, that I hardly knew whether she was fully entering into the passage or waiting for a comment upon it; and though I do not like to gild gold, I was so anxious to deliver a *full* gospel, that I added, "Now if you owed an immense bill at the shop, and had nothing to pay, and I stood your friend, and went and paid it all off, aye, and even double of what you owed, should you be in any further trouble about your debt?" "Oh, I take your comparison: no, I should be in no further trouble about the *debt*, but I should be in a *deal* of trouble to think how I should ever make you amends." Never before did I hear so sweet and so simple an application of gospel doctrine, so straight and short a cut to the true morality which is learned at the cross of Christ. "Blessed trouble, my dear friend," I exclaimed, "may we all feel it more and more! I could almost suppose there would be such a happy trouble as this in heaven itself. What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits he has conferred upon me? What? why just receive more; take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the

Lord." We had much more conversation, and I long to see her again; but this is my last day here for the present, and I shall not have time and strength to get half round ere I leave. Oh, how I could rejoice to think of you going from house to house with your supply of wine and milk for precious souls; but now I hope I can rejoice even in the want of such a fellow-labourer, knowing that there is no mistake, and that if our God would be more glorified in your being here, nothing *could* or *should* keep you away. Our Jesus doeth all things well. I thought to go into Kent to rest awhile; but my precious Master is too gracious and kind; he will not lay his poor honoured tool by.

. I desire to be very, very thankful. I have *two* beloved brothers there, all alive in the blessed work, and many dear sisters; and for officers and collectors I expect to see those valued old servants, who have often carried me in *their* arms, and who have since been gathered by my Saviour's arm, and are now carried in his bosom. You see, my loved friends, I need your prayers wherever I go; and oh, that they may abound in my behalf! you can have no idea how they strengthen and refresh me.

. But oh, how ought I to be encouraged, when I think of my incessant, my powerful Advocate, ever living to make intercession for me, and praying for me that my faith fail not! Dear Mrs. —, give my best love to her. I do bless the Lord that he called her to the work of a Sunday school, to give her a higher and happier place in *his* blessed

school; may she make rapid progress, and find the sure fruit of his teaching in the enjoyment of *great* peace. Thank my dear class for their love and sweet verses, and tell them how it rejoices my heart to hear all is going off so well. One of my girls here, in whom I had observed some change, told me the other day in private, she had been *trying* to pray the last few weeks. Oh, when will it be said of my dear — girls, “Behold, she prayeth!” May they know all the weakness and all the strength of Daniel x. 17—19. Dear —, may he encourage himself in Job xxiii. 10. I long to send a word to each and all, but I must run to my dear flock here.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

B——n, 1830.

THANK you very much, my dear kind friend, for your note. I seem to live upon Phil. iv. 19, for myself and for all dear to me; and I am quite sure the Lord will remember the word to his servant, upon which *he* has caused me to hope, for never, never shall it be said, that *he* is a staff of reed unto the house of Israel. When *he* causes to hope, he has well provided the thing hoped for; and he delights in seeing his servants rest themselves

upon his good and comfortable words, and assuredly he will give them abundant cause to say, "*Thou hast dealt well* with thy servant, O LORD, *according* unto thy *word*." I feel thankful that dear —— is permitted to linger so long upon the banks of Jordan; I do trust she will be enabled to see the precious ark standing for *her* in the midst of the waters, until she is "clean passed over." Give her, with my kind regards, 1 Tim. i. 15; may the Lord give her the hand of faith, with which to take fast hold of it, and I am sure she will say, "I have enough," for life and for death, for time and for eternity.

I am very glad my plants serve as remembrancers, and I am very sure that if you and dear —— love them, and water them, and watch over them, because they come from a poor vile worm, God, even our own God, will well keep and well water the precious plants of his beloved Son's right hand planting, purchased with groans, and tears, and blood. May you, beloved friend, your dear boy, your father, and ——, richly enjoy Isaiah xxvii. 3.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, November, 1830.

YOUR account of your sufferings has, I trust, been a means of stirring me up to charge my sluggish soul afresh, to arouse itself, and not to forget hundreds of thousands of benefits and tender mercies. You have been called sweetly to realize Mal. iii. 3; you have found a skilful, a tender, a patient Refiner, sitting continually over against the furnace, not to destroy, but to purify; not to burn a hair of your head, but only to consume another and another band, that you might walk more at large with the Son of God, and enjoy more free intercourse with him. My precious Master gave me a particularly prosperous journey; it was begun in prayer, and ended in praise. I never had three more busy days with poor souls, for we changed inside travellers very frequently, and several times I had but one with me, and we therefore came to very close work; and, of two, I believe it might be truly said, "whose hearts the LORD opened, to attend to the things spoken" by his unworthiest servant, and they blessed him again and again for having brought us together in the coach. One old gentleman, who began by telling me he "had always done ALL his duty," at length was brought to tears—the rock was smitten, and the waters would flow.

And here, my dear friend, labours multiply upon me. I am sometimes gently reminded that my precious Master *can* do without me. Oh! the wickedness of thinking he cannot; but I feel the cross of occasional weakness more than I ought, and fancy things are left undone which ought to be done.

Our hearts are much with you all, though to tell you the truth, I naughtily shrink even from the pleasure of seeing you all, knowing that the pain which is to follow will be proportionably great. But this a morrow which may never come, and I only hope that the drying up of cisterns may lead us all, more gratefully and simply, to the fountain of joy—enable us to get our joys more into their one eternal focus, and understand better what it means to rejoice *in the LORD always*.

May you increasingly realize and enjoy Cant. vi. 3, and may Jehovah Jireh be very legibly inscribed upon poor dear S——n.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, May, 1831.

. I MUST just tell you what a blessed season we had at the dedication of our schools yes-

terday. We collected all the children of God, who are as yet manifested to be his; my brother read 1 Chron. xxix., and then seemed to throw himself, his schools, and his all at the feet of his beloved Master; he then read part of 2 Chron. vii., that blessed and speedy answer to prayer in the 15th and 16th verses; then his chief tenant poured out prayer and praise; Mr. R—— then read the lxxviiith Psalm, and then dear —— prayed and praised sweetly. The little band then struck up, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the new walls resounded to the sweet notes, and I believe many sensibly felt that the glory of the LORD filled the house, even Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory. I believe also many of you were with us, helping together by prayer to God for us. Oh! I am so glad Thursday is over, never to return; our formerly happy hall has left the impression of a vault upon my mind, from the mournful stillness of that parting moment. Ah! it was indeed a moment calculated to endear unspeakably him who hath made us all one, and prepared for us a home, from which we shall no more go out.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, June 28th, 1831.

MY LOVED FRIENDS—With a trembling hand but a glowing heart, I would use my little portion of strength to thank you :—for what ? For having prayed me out of heaven into a bleak howling wilderness ; from the immediate presence of the precious Lamb, to darkness, and veils, and shadows. Strange that I should thank you for this, and that you should thus testify your love to me ! But no, my dear friends, you did not pray thus ; you have not so learned Christ ; you have not so been taught of God to love me. While I feel every bit of my reviving clay as clay prayed out of the grave, I do not feel that it is prayed out, to keep it *from* rest, but to bring it to the enjoyment of sweeter rest—the rest of heaven—the *service of Immanuel*. I triumph in my riches, even all those riches of grace, and mercy, and love in Christ Jesus, which the LORD has put it into your hearts to lay hold of on my behalf. Blessed be ye of the Lord, ye who have remembered a sister nigh indeed unto death. May the LORD show that he hath had mercy on you in having mercy on me ; and may my resurrection from the gates of the grave be for your joy and furtherance in faith. I would bless you all in the name of the LORD ; and especially bless that Chief Intercessor, who^d prayed such a spirit of prayer into so

many hearts. There was, I believe a mighty wrestling here also, while I could only groan out, as I heard the distant sounds of it, "LORD, make me something worth praying for;" and I got naughtily unhappy, thinking if I *did* get better, (which was a thought that seldom found a place in my heart,) how little shall I live and act, as one ought, for whom such prayers have been put up. But this, as you will perceive, was a vile shoot from that accursed root, self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, sown in Eden; a seed brought from hell, dropped in the soil of human nature, never to be eradicated. "Ye shall be as gods." From this seed springs, "How shall I answer to all these great things that are asked for me?" Whereas I ought to have said, "And now, LORD, behold I am the *clay*, and thou the *Potter*, and I am the work of thine hand, and all this is come of thee; and thou art engaged to answer this, 'from thee is my fruit found.'" Oh! when, when shall I learn to live out of myself, and grow up *into* Christ in *all* things?

Your last letter was a particular comfort to me, my dear Mrs. —; quite a word from God. Shall I own it was a comfort to me to hear that you had felt the flesh pressing down the spirit; that you had known the cruel harassings of an enemy in the day of darkness and gloominess! Oh! it was sometimes dark indeed; not, I think, that I for two minutes quite gave up the all-supporting "*my* LORD and *my* God;" not that I ever quite ceased to feel the left arm under my head; but I could not always feel the right

arm embracing me. One day, *Satan* would fain have shown me my God; but it was in such colours, that it was truly pain and grief to me. He told me that I was dying a *Corinthian* death; and, truly, he could easily show me this and the other vileness, and say, "For *this* cause you are weak and sickly; and for this cause you are about to sleep the sleep of death." And oh! to be put to sleep under a Father's frown was more than I knew how to bear. The total absence of sleep for thirteen days and nights; the peculiarly depressing and loathsome nature of the complaint, which made me a torment and a horror to myself; having my acquaintance and my friends put far from me, and never seeing any one but a maid and a doctor, who knew not my Lord; the feelings of my wickedly affectionate heart towards all my friends and relations, without the power of sending even messages to them; these things and many more, combined with fightings without and fears within, led me quite through the second of *Jonah*, and brought me out where he was brought out, "*Salvation is of the LORD:*" sweet truth and easy to repeat; but oh! how hard to learn. Ah! never, never should I have taken up such a book as the small pox to learn it from; but I hope I can bless my Teacher for every page, and word, and letter of the book; though I cannot look at it now that it is, as it were, laid upon the shelf again without horror, trembling, and tears. I had been led to read much of *Bridge on Faith*, and almost to *look out* for the sentence of death to be passed on our enjoyments here; and, truly, I soon

realized it.

. Ah, my dear friend, not one thing hath failed of all the good things, which the Lord hath spoken concerning us, in that ninety-first Psalm. "No evil has befallen us, neither has *any* plague come nigh our dwelling:" it has been all good, all love, all mercy; every twig of the rod spoke, and not a word could have been spared; it was a Father's voice, and oh, that not one of his words may fall to the ground And now the voice of joy and health is heard in our tabernacle: all are well, and I am quite as convalescent as could be reasonably expected after such a five weeks. I can walk a little alone during the last week, and now get some refreshing sleep; but my sheaves are greatly shattered, and my doctor insists upon it that my mind lies fallow: happily he is not coming to-day, or I could not have ventured upon this exertion; but my chief Physician seemed to give me leave and even to invite me to commune with you, though I must confess any excitement, at present, brings on fever.

. Well! life is sweet when it is CHRIST, and sickness and the gates of death are precious, when they let us into Canaan, and are the means of our bringing back rich clusters into the wilderness for our fellow-pilgrims. Mr. R—— heard from —— yesterday, who speaks thus of illness and of the *cheering* effects of having been at the gates of heaven. Oh! that it may be thus with me!

. I very often think of dear ——, I know he has thought of me. . . . It is a cord of union of the LORD's making, and shall never be broken.

..... Dear —— is much in the furnace, but she knows who sits over against the proof-hole. Your dear father, I thought much of him, when I was nearly blind, and, I hope, prayed that he might see glorious things. My school children lay heavily upon my heart, when I was at the worst. I kept looking at one and another, and thinking, "Ah! what will *you* do, if you lie thus and cannot say MY GOD? How is dear ——? I often think of her prayerful countenance, when she parted from me. . . . I have frequently thought she drew down the small pox upon me, though she meant not so, neither did her heart think so; but it has been a shower of blessings out of a dark cloud.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, *July 27th*, 1831.

.... I MUST thank you, my very dear friend, for your truly kind and interesting letter, and above all for your frequent drawings upon the best treasury in my behalf. Oh! it is sweet to be poor and needy, when we can add, "The LORD *thinketh* upon me," and when we know something of the loving thoughts of his most loving heart. I do feel myself just the sinner suited to *such* a Saviour. Empty to be filled with his fulness; poor to possess his riches; needy for the use of his boundless supplies; most deformed that I may be

comely in his comeliness; naked that I may wear his beautiful garments; just nothing and less than nothing, that Christ may be *all, all, all!* I do please myself with the thought of how *peculiarly* all his attributes will be glorified in this piece of clay, how this *dust* shall praise him and declare his *truth*. Oh! how Jesus shall be glorified *in* his saints, and admired *in* all them that believe. . . . I know not whether most to envy or to pity dear Miss —. I almost think the innumerable streams of joy and sorrow, of meetings and partings, would quite deluge me; but I am a poor creature at such work, and find how little I have of the requisite for comely and fleet going, as exhibited in the greyhound, “girt in the loins,” Prov. xxx. 31. No more need of girding up when we arrive at home, nothing to defile, nothing that we need hurry away from, long white robes. . . . May your soul be ever satisfied with favour, my beloved friend, and full with the blessing of the LORD. I cannot ask more, you cannot hold more.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

THANK you, my loved friend, for your kind letter, but it made me sadly hungry for some more, though if it had only contained those few words about dear Mrs. —, it has furnished me with a feast for eter-

nity. She and her dear husband have long lain very near my heart, and I felt as if I *must* have them with us in our long home; and he who has enabled her to say "My Lord," would be ashamed to be called her God, if he had not "prepared for her a city." What wondrous words are these. Remember me with the sincerest love to them both; angels shall not be the only creatures to rejoice over them; my heart dances for joy, and that is only one drop out of our Jesus's full heart; "*he is satisfied,*" he now "*rests* in his love." Oh the height, oh the depth! I hardly thought my precious brother would be able to get to you, though I knew it was his heart's desire. Oh, what hath God wrought for the fox-hunting, ball-going Egyptian, now one of the foremost in the armies of the living God; "*one who can keep rank;*" no common grace in the present day of wavering, trifling, and desertion. He was greatly honoured at —; above two thousand five hundred hung upon his impressive words in that immense church. I could add much more, but I desire to know no man after the flesh, and must not indulge the fleshly gratification which mixes with the spiritual, when I talk of my too much loved brothers, and this one whom I have so often taught his a, b, c, watched over with a sort of natural mother's love, now to see him taught such wondrous things, and loved with such an everlasting love by a heavenly Father; it almost crushes me!

I neglected to answer your question about fasting, my dear friend. . . . Yes, I greatly approve of it, when it is a means of drawing us nearer to God, and

enabling us to lay out these vile but much honoured bodies in his dear, dear service; I greatly approve of it, when I see you putting your crust into your pocket and setting off for the day to distribute the "bread of life" to perishing sinners. Thus fast and thus feast, my loved fellow-labourer, and your soul shall be satisfied with goodness, and full with the blessing of the LORD. We fear A—— wants a little more of the self-denying missionary spirit, if he cannot relinquish Sabbath luxuries for the starving little ones at ——. We consider him but half a shepherd who can leave his flock on the Sabbath, and but half a missionary who cannot trust the chief Shepherd to supply all his need, while he is evidently doing his Master's work. . . . The Sabbath-school must not be left; we would take no school-master or mistress who would not give himself up as much for his flock on the Sunday, as on the Monday. A—— will think us hard task-masters, but yet I would hope and pray that he may feel the force of what we urge, and not suffer that day, which should most forward the LORD's cause at N——, to be left a blank, or filled up by teachers from the bottomless pit; for assuredly, when we desert our post, or sleep at it, the enemy will not be idle. A—— might join the loved church in the dear church walls at —— for the lecture, and he would have the privilege of hearing Mr. F—— on the Sunday evening, as well as two other evenings in the week, and surely he has known his GOD long enough to know that we are sure gainers in whatever we sacrifice for the advancement of his blessed cause. At the same time, let

him not outrun his faith. If it would not be the labour of love, and joy, and peace, the mite laid down with the full assurance of receiving a hundred-fold; let him not put his hand to the plough at N——.
 I have said more than I ought, and while exhorting to self-denial, have heard a whisper, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" May the Great Head of the Church pour out upon us all more of a spirit of self-denial and faith, and make us more certain of the great gain of sacrificing our all to him.

We have had some sweet sermons here. On Sunday evening, Mr. — was most impressive upon the parable of the ten virgins; on the line of separation, his words were awful; so near, and yet so far apart; so alike, and yet so different; virgins, lamps, slumbering, going forth, all alike, only the want of oil! though but a hair's breadth between us and the line of separation, yet, if on the wrong side, it would make as effectual a separation, as though the difference were ever so wide. There was a sort of breathless attention among the poor people. I have been much better lately. Oh! it is an unspeakable privilege to go about a little and speak for Jesus. I knew something of it before, but I knew nothing, nay, I know nothing of it now; but I know enough to keep me from envying any angel. We hope to open a night school next week; it is much upon my heart.
 Accept and distribute our love. The Lord enable you to pray and praise for your attached friend.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I OWE you much, my dear friend, for your truly interesting letter, and, I was going to add, I do not owe you any love, for indeed I dearly love you in the LORD and for your work's sake; but my proud boasting was instantly checked by the overwhelming description of true love, summed up by the Holy Ghost; "Hereby perceive we THE love, (our translators need not have added whose, for there is but one such specimen,) because he laid down his life for us." Ah! if this be *the* love, the sample, the evidence, I owe you much, my dear friend: yea, I seem to know little or nothing of it. To love against hatred—to love where all was deformity—to love even to the laying down of life for the Beloved! Truly, "*herein is love*:" but, my heart, is there such love in thee? Ah! what a dew-drop, compared with the ocean; yet, from the ocean that precious dew-drop comes, and to it shall it return; then shall we be swallowed up in love, and bless him who hath taught us to love one another with any thing of the same love wherewith he hath loved us.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, June 11th, 1832.

OUR hearts are *knit* together in love, my beloved friend, by a wonder-working hand, or, I could almost fear, a *stitch* might be *dropped*, and an awkward place made from my remissness in not having written to you ere this, while you have been passing through the fire and through the rivers. I might write pages of excuses, but whose covereth his sins shall not prosper. I would rather plead guilty, and pray that what you have met with of neglect from your *earthly* friend may be a means of greatly endearing your *heavenly* Friend, who has written to you, talked to you, visited you, watched beside you, carried all your burdens, mixed all your bitters, prepared all your sweets, lighted your candle, made all your bed, wiped away your tears, healed your wounds, soothed your sorrows, borne your sicknesses, been afflicted in your afflictions, never left you, never forsaken you. I am not quite sure, but I almost think I should be willing that you should discover more and more of the cracks in this poor broken cistern, so that it may tend to endear to you the precious Fountain. I would desire to be only the channel through which hearts may flow clean up to the Fountain. I am sure it is the only thing worth getting love for, and the only way of enjoying it, to take and lay it at the Redeemer's dear feet. Thus may we love each other in the LORD, and the LORD in each other, and

ripen for that blissful consummation, when we shall realize what we now profess, that "Christ is *all*, and in *all*."

So the Lord gave you your heart's desire, and did not withhold the request of your lips, even to the lifting up of *both* hands of your dying father, and the lifting up of his heart in the unexpected "Amen." Ah, my dear friend, our God is an *indulgent* Parent: if he were not wise as he is loving, I could almost think, sometimes, he would spoil me, he is so *very* gentle, so loving over me, and he does suffer us so to "command him concerning the work of his hands." Things which I have been ashamed to *frame* into a *prayer*, he has heard the suppressed breathing after, and has humoured me, till I have not known whether to weep or smile before him. Oh! I love to observe these things, and to *try to understand* the *loving* kindness of the Lord.

And now, my friend, that which was a clog to earth, is a magnet towards the skies. Your mansion above is filling and your cottage on earth emptying. And what is the language of this dispensation, "Upwards, upwards—onwards, onwards." You now seem to have no clog but your dear self; and I know you will tell me that is the heaviest of all. So it is truly; its little finger would break your loins, but happily you have not got to carry even a little finger of your poor body. Remember him, who hath said, "I have made and I will bear; *even I will carry* and will deliver." The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. Scarcely can we

breathe out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ere we are compelled to burst forth with "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Truly the Lord *was ready* to save us; he can scarcely, as it were, bear to hear his poor child cry out under a sense of its danger and weakness ere he flies to its help, and he fills its mouth with laughter, and its tongue with joy.

. Well, my dear fellow labourer, it is rich grace that pours this heaven into our souls, of loving to serve such a Master. If I do know *any* thing of a heart, of which I know very, very little, I do wish to be *unreservedly* his, and to be quite laid out by him for his glory. But I am often a mill-horse at my work, and often a Jehu; and have been trying to devise plans which may assist me in steering between this "sharp rock on the one side, and this sharp rock on the other side"—untempered, self-seeking zeal, and formal, heavy sloth. I have now stated engagements for every day in the week, and I think, upon the whole, I find it more profitable for the poor people, as well as for myself.

. By knowing the day and time, several can meet together, and many are the tears that are shed in our little circle. I do intreat your very earnest prayers that God may come with showers of blessings into the midst of us. I feel ashamed sometimes to think *how* interesting and how delightful the days of my exile are made, by these various calls upon my time. Nay, I could almost fear there would again be a hesitation about going home, were my Father to call

for me under present circumstances ; but he will make me ready, willing, yea, right glad when the set time is come ; if, indeed, his work be the joy of our lives, we may change worlds, but we shall not greatly change employments, only leaving all that hinders, oppresses, and distresses here.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Feb. 28th, 1833.

I TRUST you have not misconstrued my silence, my beloved friend ; but no—I know you have not, for love thinketh no evil. Yet you expected me to say something upon that important change in your mode of travelling which you are anticipating

. Your former partner did not, I believe, suffer you to lean upon him, but only encouraged and exhorted you to lean *with* him on the bosom of a heavenly Husband ; and if you were careful to please him, you knew the readiest way was in caring for the things of the LORD, that you might be holy in body and spirit. Such a fellow traveller, I do, indeed, consider a peculiar blessing from the LORD

. Such you may enjoy, my dear friend, in your new fellow traveller. May you each be

as iron to iron, provoking each other to love and good works, abounding in the same with thanksgiving. I felt so distressed at first for dear S——, I knew not what to say; but I am now fully reconciled to let them part with their *luxuries*, for the sake of precious souls, furnishing for *necessaries*. I feel assured that there are works afore prepared for you in Christ Jesus at ——, and it appears of little consequence, under what name or in what character the honoured instrument is sent there, so as the work is done, God glorified, heaven gladdened, and brands plucked out of the burning Your letter filled our hearts full of our beloved friends in affliction, with deep calling unto deep. Oh! the blessedness of knowing that the LORD *sitteth upon the flood*, giving bounds to every great and little wave by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass: yea, though they *toss* themselves, yet shall they not prevail, nor cast even their furious spray over the "*hitherto*;" a hitherto which forces them to work for the everlasting good of the Bride of their Maker. Ah, surely they see our loved friends one with this glorious Creator, though in their own eyes perhaps less than nothing, a crushed worm. . . . The waters saw in Israel, what tear-blinded Israel could scarcely see for himself; the waters saw *thee*, oh God, the waters saw *thee* and were afraid; "the deep in amazement uttered his voice," and in silent admiration and obeisance "lifted up his hands on high."

What a mercy that the "hoar hair" has experienced so rich a fulfilment of promise, and been carried over ground on which the strong man would have bowed,

yea, utterly fallen. We shall long to hear of that precious old pilgrim, who has been spared to follow so many of his fellow-travellers to their long home, and been so cheered with a full hope of their glorious resurrection. I cannot attempt to express the joy we have felt over dear Mrs. B——; but no wonder that that which causes a fresh burst of unutterable joy in that presence where is *fulness* of joy, should be more than our little narrowed hearts can hold or express. For our dear C——, we feel much and shall want to hear every particular. She is very dear to us, (and will be for ever,) but not dear enough for us to be willing to let her go home yet.

I could fill sheets with telling you of all my dear people here. Oh! they are too dear to me, they make life so dear, that, I fear, I sinfully cling to it, and am in danger of loving my work better than my Master; or, loving it for the work's sake instead of for his sake. But there is so much of vile self in it all, that I often have to mingle my bitterest groans, with my liveliest joys. There is such a deeply interesting shaking and moving among the bones, which a short time since, were so *very* dry. The word is working in many a conscience, and with some it proves itself to be the mighty power of God. There are those, of course, who are taking advantage of this *appearance* of life, and *actual* life in the open valley, and have crept into some houses and led captive silly women, and parts of the xvth of Ezekiel have been strikingly exhibited; so that those who were lying in their blood, a few weeks since, are now trusting in their own beauty and

playing the harlot, I fear, in spiritual things; displaying their ornaments and polluting their gifts. But our God can and will manage his froward children, and rule his servants well. The wrath, the follies, the infirmities of man shall all praise him, as far as he allows them to break out, and the rest he can and will restrain.

I have been enabled to resume my cottage readings again, and find not a few Lydias and Bereans A work is going on now, against which principalities and powers shall fight in vain; a work which shall esteem all earth-wrought iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. Meantime sin not against the LORD by ceasing to pray for us. Israel is coming up from Egypt, but they shall soon find Pharaoh hotly pursuing them, and crying out in fury and astonishment, "Why have we let the people go?" I ask you to pray, I trust I need hardly ask you to praise; and you will get many a dear one around you to pray and praise with you.

LETTERS TO MRS. B—N,
SCHOOL-MISTRESS.

LETTER I.

September 26th, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Could my heart make itself visible to you and my beloved children every time it is with you, you would not often have to complain of an absent Miss P——. I seem still to be popping about from one school to another, and from one child to another, and I may truly say that separation has only served to increase my interest in all. And if one little drop of that mind which was in Christ Jesus, has made me thus to yearn over these precious souls, what must that ocean of love and pity be, from which this drop is communicated! How incessantly does Jesus walk in the midst of these schools! with what bowels of mercies does he look upon his blood-bought children! with what tenderness does he fold his little ones in the bosom of everlasting love! May you be enabled to see him who is invisible, my dear friend; so shall your labours be sweet, your mind free from care, your heart overflowing with hope and joy. When in difficulty and perplexity, you have an

infallible Counsellor ; when in trouble, the tenderest of Comforters ; when in joy, one who richly shares your joy, in that he is seeing of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied ; when weeping over the hardened and careless, you may even find a kindred spirit in Jesus ; when encouraging the faint-hearted, you have one with you, who knows how to speak a word to the weary ; when succouring the tempted, you have one to appeal to, who knows what it is to be tempted, yea, to go through the peculiar temptations of childhood ; having been himself the *child* Jesus. When even contemplating the awful sight of one hardened in sin, under instruction, you have one to go to who can teach you to say, " Even so, Father, if so it seem good in thy sight." Great, blessed, and glorious indeed, the honour of being employed for such a Master ! Had our commission been like that of the prophet of old, only to make the heart of the children fat, and their ears heavy, and to close their eyes ; appalling and tremendous as the errand had been, yet the glory of the Master would have consecrated the awful task, and any command from that lip should have made us ready to say, " Here am I, send me." But encouraged, as we now are, to set about our work with the unfailing promise, that it shall *not* be in vain in the Lord ; that we shall come again rejoicing, bringing our *sheaves* with us ; however great the heat and burden of the day ; however long the period, ere the shadow of the evening cheer the weary labourer ; yet how cheerfully, how thankfully should we go on for such a Master, in such an employment, and

with such a prospect ! And when, added to this, we hear him say, "*Lo, I am with you always ;*" when we see the Master not ashamed to come and work with his unworthy labourers ; yea, when we see him taking all the roughest work, bearing all the heaviest burdens, standing between us and the scorching sun ; when we look back upon the time, when by day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night ; when sleep departed from his eyes, that he might finish the work that was given him to do ; when we look forward to the time, when those among whom we have laboured, shall be the pay and the rejoicing of the beloved Redeemer's soul, and shall grace his triumphs through eternity ; well may we count the hardest labours ease, and the longest years but a few days, for the love wherewith we should love him.

Oh that he may shed abroad his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost ! Oh that this precious breath may breathe upon our gardens, that the spices may flow forth ! Then let our Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit ; and may the fruit abound more and more to the glory of the riches of grace !

I will not indulge myself by asking questions about each and all, because, if the Lord will, I trust it will be but a little while now ere I see you again, and hear every particular. Tell my dear girls, if they wish to give me a great treat on my return, it will be to let you have a favourable report to make ; I have no greater joy than to hear this.

Do not be prodigal of your health and strength, my dear fellow labourer ; it is required in stewards

that a man be found faithful—he is as unfaithful who is wasteful, as he who hides his talent, and is too often set to work by self-pleasing and self-will: this is my case very frequently, and this leads me to warn others.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

August 2nd, 1826.

I FLATTER myself, my dear fellow-labourer, that some intelligence respecting your S—— party of friends will not be unwelcome or uninteresting to you; and as we may generally find a large bit of self at the bottom of most of our actions, I must acknowledge that in now writing to you, I do feel very desirous to levy a heavy tax upon your prayers and praises on my behalf. Say not, “Wherewith shall I pay it?” but look to him who can prepare the tribute money, even in a fish’s mouth, and who can so enrich you out of his unsearchable riches, that you shall be able to offer willingly and largely of that which he has first given to you.

What a mercy it is, my dear M., that the field is *the* world—that we cannot say of one corner, “There is nothing to be done here for the Lord.” What a mercy, that our precious Master does not confine his cheering, life-giving presence to any particular spot, but

is very near to each of his unworthy labourers always, even to the remotest part of the earth—ever ready to fan the feeblest spark of desire to promote his glory into a flame; to lift up the hands that hang down; to confirm the feeble knees; and to say to them who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong.” And oh, what a crowning mercy, to have that heaven of heavens poured, or even dropped, into our souls—a desire to do his will and to glorify his name. Did he bestow no other blessing upon us, surely the joy, the privilege of serving such a Master, during the days of our pilgrimage in this dreary, uninteresting, waste howling wilderness, would call for loudest and sweetest notes of praise. Thanks, thanks unto our covenant God, for the willing mind; thanks unto him who has afore prepared the work in Christ Jesus for us; thanks unto him who has wrought all our works in us. Truly, praise is comely for us; may it be increasingly pleasant to us!

But while I would praise for this drop of heaven in my soul, I cannot, I must not forget that it is dropped into a most poisonous, leaky vessel. I would remember that in me dwelleth no good thing, but every thing that defileth; while an enemy from without is ever busy to stir up all the filthiness, even the very dregs of the cup, and pollute and poison all that is holy and heavenly. Then let me urge you to unite prayer with praise for your sinful sister. Yet a little while, and he who is now surrounded with the prayers of his poor needy children, shall soon have only the praises of his people to inhabit.

You heard, I think, of the mercies which encompassed our going out and our coming in; and every day and hour since have we been loaded with benefits. A great door and effectual has been opened unto us for visiting the poor, speaking to dear children, and forming a female Bible Association. My adorable Master has indulged me in my favourite work of speaking to children. A nice school has been opened for me on the Wednesday of about thirty children, and so large a one on the Sunday, that my flesh and my heart have almost failed me; but I trust it has been the means of driving me to a nearer acquaintance with him who is the strength of my heart, and of whom it is my unspeakable privilege to add, "My portion for ever." It is a Sunday school of above a hundred children; and so attentive a company of children and teachers I never before addressed. But he only who has graciously prepared the work for me, knows how much my naturally very nervous constitution shrinks from any thing so public; and it is my mercy to tell him all my trouble, as my *compassionate* High Priest touched with the feeling of my infirmity, and to be made willing in some happy moments even to glory in them that the power of Christ may rest upon me, and that he alone may be glorified. Oh, in our right minds how should we rejoice in the exchange of our own poor, powerless power for the power of Christ! how should we glory in being nothing and less than nothing that Christ may be all in all!

I need scarcely ask you to remember me in a

more peculiar manner on the Sunday morning, and on the Wednesday afternoon; nay, I know not that I desire to specify any particular time. I am poor and needy every hour of the day, *but* the Lord careth for me.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

November 28th, 1829.

I BUSTLED on my things this afternoon, and got out of the door, with the full hope of paying you a little visit, my dear friend and sister, and closing your thirty-ninth year with you. But my gracious Guardian and Keeper gently but steadily said to me, nay; for I turned so faint, I was obliged to get back to my sofa as soon as I could. My God had another and a more useful lesson to teach his beloved child—not so agreeable to the flesh, but more profitable to the spirit—that she *can* do without a broken cistern, seeing she has an overflowing Fountain. He will make her quite perfect in that hard saying, a saying which our dull souls are years in learning, and in the want of which arises all our craving voids and disappointments, “There is *none* upon earth I desire beside thee.” Ah, what a shame it seems, that he who

fills all heaven with gladness should not be enough to fill our poor little souls, but that there must be a large corner left for a worm to fill. No wonder that that is an aching corner; no wonder that its unceasing cry is "Give, give;" no wonder that he whose name is Jealous will not suffer the worm to fill the place which is his by right and by purchase, and which will never be easy till it be possessed by him. Dearly as I love you in the Lord, and much as I prize your love to me, I would gladly say, as I retire from my ill-deserved corner of your heart, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"

I trust he will put strength in me to plead for you, my dear "fellow-labourer," and to pull down many a blessing for you on your opening year. He has just told me, in language which I could not mistake, that his eye and his heart are upon you for good, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of it; and while I look at that heart *resting* in its love towards you, that wakeful eye, beaming with care and tenderness, what may I not ask? what may I not expect? *No good will he withhold.* If your fellow-labourer is a good, you shall have her; if a shaking among the dry bones around you is a good, you shall have it; if blossom and fruit are a good, you shall have them. "Ask what I shall give thee," is at the head of a measureless blank, with no limit as to withholding, but this merciful one, "*No good will he withhold.*" "What else we want, or think we do, 'tis better still to want." On the seal is engraved, "*My God shall supply all your need,* according to his riches in glory,

by Christ Jesus." In filling up part of the blank, I would fain put in, "Lord, let her have a wrestling spirit for her needy sister; and surely, Lord, in asking this, I ask according to thy will, for though I am poor and needy, yet *thou* carest for me." *

I have no little token of my love beside me to send you, but a little book, which has proved as a golden spade to me, in assisting me to dig into the golden mine. May it be made such to you, my dear sister, and enable you to dig deeper and deeper into the unsearchable riches of Christ. I like it the better, because it is chiefly formed out of that mine. Praying that you may richly experience what it is to be *filled* with *all* the fulness of God, I remain, &c.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

R——n, July 23rd, 1833.

How often has my heart talked with you, my dear fellow-labourer, and I trust I may say talked for you, to our one own Father, Brother, Husband, Counsellor; and unchangeable, immoveable Friend. It is so sweet to realize "*One* is your Master," when I go to him for his dear directions for the day. Morning by morning I seem to meet around his door-posts many dear in the flesh, but dearer far in the Spirit. I have

walked over the consecrated spot of ground at ———, and trod the little private path up to the house, with the hope that it would be better marked out one day, and strewed thick with mercies, and that it may form one of the increasingly flowery meadows you have yet to pass through on this side the grave.

The Lord seems to have strung two jewels on the link of the chain, which confined us to this place, a school-master and an infants' school-mistress. The Lord grant you to be *quite* filled with *all* this fulness, and never to find an empty craving corner.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Sept. 8th, 1830.

I FEAR, my dear fellow-labourer, you will have thought me long in complying with your request for a few moments of my time, and in acknowledging the receipt of your welcome letter; but while my heart has frequently talked of you and for you, my hands, and head, and tongue seem to have been trebly engaged, and my adorable Master has honoured me with such a press of occupation, that many times, I might truly say, I had no leisure, so much as to eat. My brother and I started from home about ten days since, to endeavour to crowd into a week the work which

he had laid out for a month; God, even our own God, hath blessed us, and prospered us, and so carried us through, that we were enabled to return yesterday. A great door and effectual is opened to us; and you know what our God has inseparably connected with this—"there are many adversaries." But you know also, that it is the same hand that opens the door that has created the waster to destroy; "that hath made leviathan, that piercing serpent;" that hath said, "The deceiver and the deceived are his;" all so far created by him and for him, for whom *all* things were made, that they shall just do his work, and promote his glory, though their hearts mean not so, neither do they think so. If the waster destroy, he shall but destroy the spirit of slumber—the deathly calm of the children of men—for the Spirit immediately adds, "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.*" Hath he made leviathan? he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him, though "he laugheth at the shaking of *our* spear;" and can put his hook in his nose, and his bridle in his jaws, and turn him whithersoever he pleaseth. Are the deceiver and the deceived his? Then, if a Pharaoh and all Egypt stand up against the Israelites, it shall be but for a manifestation of the mighty power of God, and that his name may be declared throughout all the earth.

. . . . My stock of strength has not been such as to lead me to glory in the flesh; indeed I am seldom

without that difficult lesson in my hand, "Learn to glory in thine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon thee." It is often exceedingly distressing, but I am quite sure, as soon as the lesson is thoroughly in my heart, my kind Teacher will destroy the lesson book. I do hope I would not wish for a grain more strength than will be laid out for his glory; yet, if I were sincere in this, I should be quite as happy, when laid by on a sofa, as when most actively engaged in his work; but then old heart starts up, and taking up the language of new heart, says, "Oh that I might have but strength to speak to these perishing souls night and day, and invite them to Jesus!" But my Father quiets all with, "My child, thou shalt do all my pleasure; thou art my servant, in whom I will be glorified." And my patient elder Brother says, "All that the Father giveth me *shall* come to me. I know my sheep, and them I *must* bring, and they *shall* hear my voice." And the Comforter says, "Thy people *shall* be willing, in the day of thy power."

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

F—e, Oct. 30th, 1830.

I CANNOT pass so near you, my dear fellow-labourer, without dropping a word by the way, and what word so sweet as the salutation of the Spirit, "Grace and peace be *multiplied* unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord," according as his divine power hath given unto us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Yes, my dear friend, grace and peace *are* multiplied unto us in proportion as we acquaint ourselves with God, and with our Lord Jesus. Through this channel flows unto us the enjoyment of all things that pertain to life and godliness. To know him better and better, as having *all* power in heaven and earth, as loving us with an everlasting love, as making over all he is, and has, to us for ever; this is life, this is the enjoyment of life this is to have all and abound. If to this life, and to this godliness, *I* am to be the honoured means of contributing, remember, I am among the "*all things*," and my God hath given me to you. If I am not given to you, rest assured I am *not* among the *all things*, and should rather be a source of death than of life. . . .

. . . . Give my love to all the dear children; tell them I sometimes read 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21, with a

eye to them, and with a trembling heart. For you, my dear sister, I look at Rom. i. 10—12. I long to take in the 9th verse, but it is too high for me.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Sept. 13th, 1837.

WHAT think you of home, my dear sister? Perhaps this is the next question to, what think ye of Christ? and either will ascertain the spiritual pulse pretty well. But where is the believer truly at home, save in Christ, and what is Christ to the believer but home with all its comforts, all its security, all its quietness and charms? Our *strong* habitation, whereunto we may continually resort; no form, no fear, an open door, a feeling of welcome that you can have no where else. I know not what place you call home on earth, my dear Mary, but the question I was going to put to you, "when do you think of coming home?" led me just to inquire, "what think you of home?" "He builds too low, who builds beneath the skies." I would not have you call even your snug little corner your home, but as you find Christ in it.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

F--c, Sept. 19th, 1838.

You will begin to think it long, my dear Mary, ere you hear any tidings of us, though I hope you have heard second hand from home; I cannot tell you how greatly your letter rejoiced us, and how much it cheered and interested me; truly our God is very pitiful and of *tender* mercy. Sometimes I think he has shamed me out of all fear and cares for ever; yet, let but one little cloud come over my sky, and the crop of these noxious weeds is as rampant and as abundant as ever. In reading the xcvth Psalm to-day, I might *well* cry, "*we* have sinned, with our forefathers, *we* have done amiss, and dealt foolishly, *we* have tempted him and proved him forty years *long*." Ah, those *are* long years, long days, long hours, when we are limiting and tempting the Holy One of Israel, harbouring hard thoughts of him, and sinfully asking, "*Can* God do this for me?" The good Lord keep us out of these depths; or, if we fall into them, may he enable us to realize that the deep places of the earth are *in* his hand; or, if we are enabled to walk upon our high places, and feel our mountain stand strong, may we as deeply realize that the strength of the hills is his also; surely, if ever children should come into

their father's presence with thanksgiving, we are those children; how great is your blessedness, to see your beloved mother alive for evermore, and to hear her happy soul magnify the Lord, and her spirit rejoice in God her Saviour. . . .

. . . . I do not like to say any thing about your movements, as they will depend very much upon your beloved mother's state of body and mind. The Lord, I know, will prepare her heart and yours, for all that he has prepared for you in the way of providence. The chariot in which he conveys his dear people home, is paved with love, and in this they can safely and comfortably travel over the roughest parts of their appointed journey. You will, perhaps, write to me again, and tell me how she is, and whether it appears likely that she is to leave you, or you to leave her. If her chariot and servants come for her, it will be a glorious equipage, and I trust you will all be enabled to rejoice, when you see her step into it, and just feel, that he hath dealt well with you, and with her, *according* to his word.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

C—n, Sept. 24th, 1839.

HAVE you had any hard thoughts of me, my dear fellow-labourer? Well, I must not complain if you have; for I should have had many hard ones of an unchangeable friend, had I been as long without hearing from him. But be assured, my dear friend, it was love which dictated silence, love to you, and especially love to your dear father, who, I fear, will miss his prop the more, now that he is deprived of one, on which he had been accustomed for so many years to lean. But whatever props are knocked from under the believer, everlasting arms are still underneath, and when the prop is gone, we do but more sensibly realize the softness and the strength of those precious arms. Oh, that it may be thus with him! He is sure also of getting good interest upon you, for the little while he lends you to the Lord here below, nothing less than a hundred-fold; and if he does not seem to receive it in full tale now, he will, when he sees his child before the throne, with the hundred children whom the Lord hath given her; and when he swells her notes of eternal praise, and feels that she is to go no more out.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

January 25th.

It is with deep sympathy, my dear fellow-labourer, that I hear of your indisposition, and I fear it makes me naughtily long to resume my share of labour, and to relieve a little your head, and hands, and heart. But all that I feel is only a drop out of the full heart of your Jesus, who is as able, as he is willing, to be head, hands, feet, heart, yea. the strength of your heart; all in all to you. I was engaged in my waking hours, last night, in pleading for you, and probably we met at the same time, and at the same place, to put in our petition each for the other. I hope you have not worried yourself about the Sunday-school. Let us remember, my dear friend, there is no chance in the coming and leaving of our dear children: no difficulty with the Lord, to bring or to keep, and no mistake in removing. May we lie quiet in his precious hands, with a single eye to his glory; and be enabled to say, with our beloved elder Brother, under discouragements and wintry seasons, "*Surely* my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

. . . . I would roll you up in 1 Thess. v. 33, 34, and remain your very faithful friend.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE scarcely half a minute, my dear sister, but lest you should take it hard if you have not one word, I must write three, if no more, and again say, "I love you." Blessed be our covenant God and Father! "Ask what you *will*," &c. Wondrous to put such a blank into our hands; we give him cause to fill it with, "O fools, and slow of heart."

The same post that brought your letter, brought one which quite set aside the other we had any idea of. Our kind Lord thus made it doubly plain. Be very much in prayer for me; much lies before me; both for the flesh and for the spirit. Oh, I talk like one of the foolish women, and the next moment I may be in my long home, and have done with fightings without, and fears within. But quite as safe here, and as happy, when my will is one with my Father's.

..... Oh, how my poor old heart is torn about! But new heart rests sweetly in the ark, and rides over the troubled waters.....

LETTERS TO MRS. B——, INFANT SCHOOL-MISTRESS.

LETTER I.

August 29th, 1825.

I CANNOT tell you *how* often my thoughts are with you, my dear fellow-labourer, and with what affection I bear you and your precious charge upon my heart, when I go to my God to entreat the richest blessings for those whose welfare is very dear to me. I feel that it is now all that I can do for you; and this, perhaps, makes me more earnest in prayer than when I could be with you daily: in this way, if in no other, shall we find that my absence is assuredly among the ALL things that work together for your good. It is one of our hardest lessons, to learn to cease from man; and one, over which we, perhaps, show the most ill-temper, stupidity, and stubbornness. I can but admire the patience and meekness of our heavenly Instructor, in bearing with the provocations of his sons and his daughters on this point. I can but wonder that he does not blow down, in a whirlwind of jealousy and displeasure, the many props which our idolatrous hearts have been so busy in rearing, and on which they

take such delight in leaning, while they are so prone to depart from the living God. Instead of that, how carefully, how tenderly does he deal with us! With what a gentle touch does he shake the prop, warning us not to lean too much upon it; and, if we force him to remove it utterly, with what reluctance does he do it; how plainly does he manifest that he does not afflict willingly, and that in all our afflictions he is afflicted. Remember, my dear friend, that when props are removed, it is not that you should *fall*, but that you may rest more simply upon those everlasting arms which are underneath you; and may realize more of the tenderness, love, and faithfulness with which they encircle you. Though you cannot now say, "I am a worker together with Miss P——," you are privileged to use far, far higher language, and to say, "I am a labourer together with God." 1 Cor. iii. 9. And, surely, there is no part of our adorable Lord's labour that he takes more delight in than among his much-loved infants. May his presence cheer you, his counsel guide you, his wisdom teach you, his love warm you, and his approbation encourage you. Tell my dear little ones how much Miss P—— loves them, and how she longs to see them again.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

September 9th, 1830.

MY DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER—I cannot let a parcel go without a few words to you; and I should indeed have written to you before, but that I know my dear friends, to whom I have written, let you share the spoil with them; and that you have all things in common. This thought is often very sweet to me, when I read my best letter, to know that all whom I love are enjoying the same. Did you enjoy the sweet little note sent us to-day? “Fear not, O land: be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do *great* things.” Could you slip the word S——n in, instead of land? May the LORD speak this word to you again and again, my dear friend, “Peace be unto you: fear not.” And when he giveth quietness, who can make trouble? We are but just returned from B——n Q——; and I am sure you will be very thankful to hear that we were greatly delighted with all we heard and saw — inquired much after you all, and told me to tell you, “that the LORD was feeding them by means of poverty.” The unriddling of this riddle is, that they are driven, through the poverty of public means, to live upon the Scriptures and to cease from man. There is not any one they can hear with pleasure or profit; and I assured them theirs was no uncommon case; indeed, I do think the LORD is thus

driving many of his dear children to say, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak unto me;" and they are taught to sit at his feet, and wait at the posts of his gate, instead of lying down, half asleep, to have truths, which have been dug out of the mine by others, poured into their ears.

I send you Heb. xiii. 20, 21, and my very sincere and best wishes.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

November 12th, 1832.

MY DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER—I am ashamed to find my heart lowing after you as it does; for our precious Master can have made no mistake in assigning us our different places in his vineyard. Oh that our eye may be single, simply fixed upon him; and our heart guileless, intent upon finishing the work he has given us to do! And, then, it will not much matter who works nearest to us, or farthest off. If our Boaz is with us, it is enough. How happy you all made dear B——! I trust it was a season of refreshing to you all; not from the presence of a worm; but from the presence of the Lord.

. . . . My dear Lord gives me daily strength for daily labour, just enough, and none to spare; and that is just nice to be kept hanging upon him. The *Old*

man covets independence. The *New man* loves to feel dependent. In the former is anxiety, danger, ruin; in the latter, peace, safety, salvation. I long to talk to so many, if it is only on paper; but I dare not leave my Master's work for such self-gratification. We shall have eternity for talking of all his wondrous works: only an inch of time for inviting poor sinners to come into the ark. May we all be up and doing. Yours is an honourable, a blessed post: the LORD make you as showers of blessings to his little flock. Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, August 1st, 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I fear you have often thought me shabby, if not unkind, in not writing to you more frequently; but truly, it was not from want of inclination, but from being pressed with various occupations, I may say, almost daily, above strength; not though, so as to *despair* of life, but in the blessed assurance, that he who loseth his life for Christ's sake shall keep it unto life eternal. Oh, the misery of hugging up one's life within self: like a corn of wheat kept above ground, it is but a corn still—"it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It must have been an act of faith which first committed

seed to the ground; and oh, what blessed faith, daily and hourly to "hate our life in this world." Have you observed the beautiful conformity of head and members? John xii. 23—26. Have you heard the sermon in every full ear of corn? See how our Jesus has obtained a harvest which has fully satisfied his soul. See the much fruit of his giving his life a ransom for many. See the Christian who is most conformed to his image. There is the hundred-fold Christian; it matters not whether it be in the pulpit, or the cottage; the abundant crop is there. Do not, however, imagine, that because I *know* these things, I therefore *do* them. Oh no! I scarcely know the feel of a cross; mine is much of self-pleasing, show, field-day work, tinkling cymbal, and such like. Your little corner is a more favourable place for such a dying, living life. The buckling-to to the same thing day after day, with little or no excitement from fellow-creatures' gaze; the wear and tear of mind and body; the constant tax upon faith and patience; these furnish a glorious means for conformity to your glorious Head, and doubtless shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at his appearing. May he impart to you much of HIS mind, for truly it wants better materials than your own can furnish, for such a life as this: and oh, the mercy to know that *he* is your life, and that because he lives you *shall* live also; live a life of faith here, and of glory hereafter. Surely, my dear friend, we who have been taught of God, that it is not *we* who live, but Christ who liveth in us, have a double heaven to thank for. If we had to trust to

sparks of our own kindling, we might toil early and late, and use poor nature's bellows till they were consumed, and after all, lie down in sorrow, and in darkness.

. . . . I visit you very often in spirit ; I open the eye of faith, and see you honoured above millions. I see you labouring, not for the meat which perisheth ; but for that which endureth to everlasting life. I see you labouring, not for a crumbling world ; but to furnish lively stones for the temple of the living God, which is to stand for ever.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

C—n, October, 1833.

MY DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER—How often do my eyes and my heart rest upon you ! Yes, *rest*—there are not many things under the sun upon which they can rest ; for the earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, and is tossed as a thing founded upon the seas, and established upon the floods. But upon the dear, faithful labourer, in the unspeakably happy vineyard, my very heart and soul can and do rest. “ Sweet their portion is and sure.” Much of their work, to be sure, lies under the clods ; but none the worse for that, it shall come up in his season. “ I the LORD will hasten it in his season.” “ *Light is sown :*” strange seed !

glorious crop! The poor old labourer sees some who have borne the heat and burden of the day with him, dropping off around him; but what of that? they enter into rest, and fresh ones are coming into the field. At times the sun beats hot upon his head; but his Master has provided a grand shadow from the heat; no less than his own precious Self. "The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand." Sometimes clouds arise, and the sky is overcast; but he has a Sun that shall not go down, an everlasting light, for the LORD God is his Sun. Sometimes his fellow-labourers vex, or distress him; but he has One to work with him, who never tires, never neglects, never worries—"Certainly *I* will be with thee," is company enough. Happy, happy the people that are in such a case!

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

C—n, November 26th, 1831.

MY DEAR FRIEND—We long to hear how you are getting, and whether another olive-branch has made its appearance at your table. They are precious branches, coming, as they do, in connection with "The Branch," full of the rich sap of exceeding great and precious promises, to which the amen has been set in Christ Jesus. Look at that sweet one to

this point, Isaiah lix. 21 ; how graciously the "seed's seed" are provided for ! what a goodly portion ! The multiplied little faces, with their compound multiplication of wants, need not fill your hearts with the anxious inquiry, "What shall they eat ? or, what shall they drink ? or, wherewithal shall they be clothed ?" Your heavenly Father knoweth that they have need of all these things, and having given them the best treasures of his kingdom, will he withhold the needful trifles of earth ? These are, as Gurnall says, but the paper and pack-thread thrown into the bargain. When you see them all around you in glory, you will not think you have had one heart-ache too many ; only, my dear friends, see to it that you have the pledge of the fulfilment of the covenant, in that you have grace to crucify old nature, and not honour your children's will instead of the will of God. I see no covenant-breaking, but a covenant-keeping God in the many weeping Elis, silent Aarons, and miserable Davids of the present day. I see he is very faithful who hath said, "Those who honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The unmeaning "Nay, my sons," or the self-pleasing abstaining from displeasing a child, with a "Why hast thou done so ?" 1 Kings i. 6, may produce the Hophni, the Phinehas, and the Adonijah ; but not the Israelite circumcised in heart from the eighth day and forward. I know well that the first step in denying a child, is to deny *self* ; in this, as every thing else, the road to the crown is marked out by the daily cross, planted in each dear footstep of that glorious Fore-

runner, who "pleased not himself:" and we turn aside from the footsteps of the chief Shepherd and the little flock at our peril.

The Lord give thee understanding in all things, and, knowing these things, give thee grace also to do them. I have no reason to think you are wanting on this point; but as I see a general deficiency, I long to know that every twig of your dear, growing family is decidedly, devotedly, unreservedly trained for, and dedicated to your God; then shall each one prove an added comfort, and you shall surely find that "He is faithful who hath promised."

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, January 29th, 1838.

. I HOPE you will never scruple to tell me all that is in your heart. Oh what have I asked! No, the true Solomon alone could bear with such disclosure. The sins of one day in the best kept heart, would be enough to frighten every fellow sinner far away, and leave its possessor, like the poor deserted leper, uttering, through a dreary waste, the dismal sound, "Unclean, unclean!"

Happy for thee, poor leper, that thou hast a hiding-place, whereunto thou mayest continually resort; a

hiding-place of one pearl, so precious, so brilliant, that even thou art brilliant in his brilliancy, lovely in his loveliness, perfect in his comeliness. Oh, "let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." I do not wish to slip out of harness; he who has given the work, has undertaken also to work all our works in us. *One* is our Master, great is our reward.

LETTERS TO MRS. S—H.,

SCHOOL-MISTRESS.

LETTER I.

C—n, July 27th, 1831.

I MUST not let you go without a line, my dear Mrs. S—h, if it is only to thank you for your nice long letter, though my head aches very much, and tells me I have done too much to-day. Ah, my dear fellow-labourer, "work while it is day;" do not have to learn the value of your privilege, as I have, by being deprived of it; and "take heed to your spirit."

I verily believe I should not so often be laid on the shelf, if there were less of wretched "*I*" in my doings. Oh that I could but learn, while in labours more abundant, to speak plainly, and from my very, very heart,

"*Not I!*" Well, I shall, I must learn it, ere I get to that blessed land, where every crown is cast at the Redeemer's feet, and every glory strewed under his throne.

I hope you have sent us every particular. I should just like to hear of each child as if you had but one. Have you managed to shut prejudice and partiality out? they are unwearied and persevering, and most injurious intruders. . . . I suppose you are beginning to think of harvest and home; there is sweet and natural connection in the words, certainly. The LORD fix our hearts upon the last harvest and the long home!

. . . . Tell my dear children how often I am with them in spirit; may I add, "joying and beholding their order?" Give my very kind regards to them, &c.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

C—n, Sept. 23rd, 1831.

. . . . WHEN you have an opportunity of writing, pray tell me every particular of the schools, and whether you are enjoying much communion with the Father of spirits, and are enabled to be much in prayer for the souls committed to your charge. Your work is but begun when your children leave you for the day; at least, if your heart is like my heart. I find the easiest

time is while I am with them. The fight of faith, and the labour of love, and the "great conflict," are in the secret chamber, and form the most important part of our work. What is done in public is, as it were, but the *reflection* of what takes place in private; the one cannot flourish or decay, but the other will make it manifest. The LORD give you much of a wrestling spirit; may he *put* strength in you, enabling you to lay hold of his strength, and as a prince to have power with God.

. . . . I begin to be deeply interested in some of our children here, and I think I can see the finger of God upon the consciences of some. There are some cheering blossoms, but there are some blossoms, we know, which drop off, and are succeeded by no fruit. Still "our labour is with the LORD, and our work with our God." And I often look at a saying of our beloved Pastor's, "It is reward enough for the hardest service to have Christ for our Master."

. . . . Say to my dear girls all that a most affectionate teacher and faithful friend could say: nay, I have imposed too heavy a task upon you, but do assure them of my continued love and earnest desires for their real happiness, and believe the same, my dear friend, for yourself, &c.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

March 9th, 1833.

MY beloved sister has, I find, written to you, dear Mrs. S——h, and left me many to write to; but still I do not like to appear to pass you by. I know I need give no charges about the work. I am pleased to think that it is sure to be nicely done; if I give any charge about it, it would be “Don’t let it occupy too large a place in your or your children’s thoughts and anxieties.” It is well with Martha to provide a dinner, with Ann to get work nicely done; but when it is *all* preparing dinner, and arranging work, and no leisure or inclination for sitting at the Master’s feet, and hearing his word, he will soon make us hear, in a voice which will nearly break the heart of a loving child, “Martha, Martha, *one* thing is needful.” Try, my dear friend, to realize that each day may be the last you may spend with your scholars, either as it regards your own life, or that of one or more among them. Often think you hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd, as he turns in to look at the flock over which he has made you overseer, inquiring of the little ones, “Children, have you any meat?” Oh let it not be that they should ever be able to answer “no!” Let him not find mistress and children diligent in business, but cold in spirit. Remember that the school is dedicated to him in no common manner; that he has been

repeatedly besought to dwell there ; to set his eyes and his heart upon it perpetually ; and that we engaged to train up those with whom he entrusted us, not for earth only, but for heaven. Your responsibility, my dear fellow-labourer, is almost crushing ; but I wish you to feel it, that you may live with the clinging cry, " Who is sufficient for these things ?" and realize, moment by moment, that your sufficiency is of God. . . . What I have said springs from my own observations, and from knowing the plague of my *own* heart.

Accept my very best wishes for the soul prosperity of you and your loved flock, and believe me, &c.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Nov. 26th, 1835.

DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER—Is it well with thee ? Is it well with thy children ? How I do long to peep at you all ! I suppose my former infants are now your great girls ; and I trust I should find them not only grown in stature, but as their Elder Brother grew. Is your work your wages, my dear friend ? and do you put the Lord in remembrance of that good word, upon which, I trust, he has caused you to hope—" He that watereth others shall be watered also himself ?" And, indeed, she that laboureth, must be *first* partaker of the fruits, or she will be but a weakly, miserable labourer. Go straight to your adorable Master, and get him

to bless and break every bit of bread before you attempt to set it before your children; then, and then only, shall they be well filled, while you will find for yourself that you have more at the end of the feast than at the beginning.

Remember me tenderly to any, old or young, who still keep a corner in their hearts for me, &c.

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, Jan. 31st, 1838.

MY DEAR MRS. S——H—Your letter was very interesting to me, as every thing connected with dear S——n will ever be; I am sorry to hear of your diminished numbers, and should it continue so, I trust you will have both health and strength to shepherd them up soon, and seek that which is lost, and bring again that which is driven away; our enemies are lively, and they are strong, and may well keep us on the alert: but, alas! we are often slumbering, while they are plotting; we are sleeping, while they are sowing tares. I am truly thankful to hear that you opened the year with prayer; this is the best security for closing it with praise.

I much long to see and hear you all again, but I am very glad I have not to chalk out my own path, or to order my own steps; it is safe travelling to come up

from the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved. He is, indeed, eyes to us in the wilderness; his command is, "Let all thy wants lie upon me." He will defray all our expenses, and never leave us till he hath done that which he hath spoken to us of, and that is, to set us before his presence for ever. Happy are the people that are in such a case!

. . . . I used to think I had *plenty* to do before the Lord was pleased to add to my labour, but "*as thy day,*" &c. has not broken down yet.

LETTERS TO THE MISSES D—G.

LETTER I.

C—n, *Sept.* 1831.

How truly kind of you, my dear friends, to give yourselves so much trouble for one so unworthy of it. Oh how you do all shame me with your love and kindness, and make me think I must have acted the hypocrite among you. I look within, and find all so different from what you seem to think of me, so little of my Master, so much of myself; and as to what I was to any of you, while going in and out among you, I am only overwhelmed by the recollection of what was left undone, or done in a slovenly, half-hearted manner. But you seem, like my blessed and adorable Master,

to forget and forgive all that was wrong, and to mention only what was lovely and of good report. Ah! to him be all the praise for that, and now, in the fountain, may you seek what you have lost in the cracked cistern.

How often, my dear kind friends, have I thought of what I said to you, I believe in my last visit, of the healthiness of this place; how has every gale, as it has blown upon my shattered frame, said "It is not in me to give health and strength." The rooms are indeed spacious, and the lawns are very lovely; all nature smiles around; but I have been as a faded flower amidst the luxuriance of health and beauty. And is there any mistake in this? could not he who makes the little flower flourish under my feet, put life and vigour into my feeble frame? I could almost think my paper blushed at the question. Ah! were it for his glory, how soon could he give me the wings of an eagle, and the strength of a lion; how should I run up and down and never be weary in his work. But it is for his glory that I am weak and crumbling; my inner man says "*most* gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Oh that sweet, quieting word, "Father," so full of balm for every wound, of relief for every care. For the most afflicted of his children to change estates with the highest angel, were surely an unspeakable loss. 'Oh the hold that word, "Father," has upon the heart of our God; whilst I can plead that with him, through our Lord Jesus Christ, need I fear that a

Father, and such a Father, will for bread, give me a stone? or for a fish, a serpent? No, if he give me sickness and pain, these are the bread, this is the fish; if he withhold health and ease, these are the stone and the serpent. May He keep me from ever questioning the love, the power, the wisdom of his fatherly heart; that heart which has abounded towards me in all tenderness, wisdom, prudence, justice, judgment, and mercy. . . .

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, October, 1833.

AND do you think, my dear friends, that you have lost your comfortable niches in my heart? No, I trust you know better. You know that we are taught of *God* to love one another; and that his lessons are not for a day, but for eternity. Real christian love, as it issues from the throne of God and the Lamb, however broken and interrupted in its course, by the ups and downs of our marred earth, still presses on through each chosen vessel, and must and will return to its high and glorious level. Yes, when mere creature love has sunk to its low original, we shall be refreshed with rivers of that love, of which it was our high privilege to have a sip by the way. Oh, precious Jesus! what do we not owe him for the luxuries of his banqueting ~~house~~ ^{home} here

below, and for the wondrous preparations made for us above! Had he dragged us through a thousand hells to his bosom and his throne, how could we sufficiently praise him? But, as though it had been a light thing to feast us through eternity, he spreads a table for us in the wilderness, in the presence of our enemies, and knows no limits to the pouring forth of his bounty, except in the smallness of the cup we present to him. For, lo! he keeps it running over, testifying that we are not straitened in him, but in our own bowels. What a luxurious dish, what a dainty, is christian love and communion, and how graciously does he favour his children with it! I rejoice to hear that you have so much of it in your *palace*, and that the good and pleasant sight is exhibited there of brethren and sisters dwelling together in unity.

My heart-often visits you, and my body could like to sit down with you again; and it shall, if there be any good in such an event, for any of us; so it may make itself easy. . . . Are you sowing in faith? or are you in nature's bustle sometimes? She is a strange busy-body, and sadly impatient. The Lord increase unto us that precious faith which does not make haste!

Accept the re-assurance of my very faithful love, and do not forget to love your friend, &c.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

February 4th, 1836.

I MUST not let a parcel go without a word to you, my dear friends; for well do I know, that if a friend do not speak, an enemy will; and will let drop a stitch, which will run a strange, long way, in the curious, cunning work of the knitting together of hearts. Yet you seem to be pretty well assured of the love I bear towards you, and that from a few poor, paltry acts, or a few half alive expressions. Oh, my dear friends, this is calculated deeply to humble me. What could have been done more, that my God hath not done for me, and yet it is too often with stammering lips and a fluttering heart, that I can say, "I have known and believed the love that God hath to me?" How unkind our suspicions! how ungrateful our misgivings! how unreasonable our expectations! seeking some sign from heaven, when we have his own word by us, in which language is beggared to express the exceeding greatness of his love towards us; every letter warmed with his very heart's blood; every truth glowing with the character of its wondrous Author, beaming love.

And can we find a page or a letter in the book of Providence which does not bear the same stamp, and show the print of the same dear hand? I cannot.

Nay, I can see him most kind when he seemed most severe; and yet a crack in a creature comfort makes

me tremble, as though some strange, unkind thing were about to befall me. How wounded we should be with such returns from a fellow creature! and yet, how thoughtlessly do we wound the only bosom on which we can ever rest!

The Lord keep you from making your loved Mary your *whole* stay and your whole staff; he will delight to indulge you, but will not spoil you.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

C——n, August 6th, 1836.

DEEPLY indeed do I sympathize with you, my beloved friends, in your present heavy trial, and much do I long to hear that our God has, in some measure, lightened his heavy hand. But how foolish am I, and ignorant, even as it were a heast before him. It is heavy only with love, guided by a Head that cannot err, and a heart keenly alive to your every woe, afflicted in your every affliction, simply finding rest in the joy of doing you good. Ah! how different from our ignorant, short-sighted love, our blind desires, our soul-injuring wishes; yet I may weep with you while you weep, my loved sister, even as my adorable Lord wept with weeping sisters, though well assured that their present woes must issue in the glory of God, and that the Son of God would be glorified thereby. It is

dangerous and painful work to have the affections too much concentrated in one. Dear Newton used to say, there was but one point which he could not quietly give up to God, and that was his wife's health, and on that point he was incessantly tormented. Nay, he added, five years after her death, that he had known more of true happiness in those five years, than in all the years of their sojourning together, when he was harassed with an unsubdued will, and an anxiety-tossed heart. The Lord enable us to possess as though we possessed not ! then shall we enjoy in peace, and resign with a comparatively slight struggle.

How mysterious is the apparent closing of the door with regard to your dear nephew—ye *did* well, in that it was in your heart. God often crosses the thoughts of our hearts, that he may perform the thoughts of his heart ; I need not say the exchange is always for the better, and will tune up some of our sweetest songs hereafter, if not here. He graciously tells us the thoughts that he thinks towards us ; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give us an expected end.

May every wish be hushed into a great calm, and sweetly die away with, " It is enough."

